the weekly Standard

JANUARY 24, 2005

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BUSH'S SECOND INAUGURAL

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The CBS Whitewash

Jonathan V. Last • John Podhoretz

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Leader (Possibly) of the Self-Revising Forces

One day in December 1992, House Minority Leader Newt Gingrich privately confided to a group of admirers—scribbling the words onto a piece of easel paper for emphasis—that his "primary mission" in life was to serve, among other things, as the "Definer of Civilization." Today, of course, a dozen years of civilization later, Mr. Gingrich is long retired from public office, and the news market for his once-patented hubris hiccups is not what it used to be. So the daily papers are sadly silent on the question: We simply do not know whether the man still fancies himself the "Definer of Civilization." Perhaps that responsibility, too, has since devolved upon Speaker Hastert.

"Definer of Entitlement Benefit Cuts," however, appears to be another matter altogether. This mission Gingrich clearly means to keep for himself. Which only makes sense; it was always one of his favorites.

During the titanic Contract with America budget battles of 1995-96, you will recall, it was Newt Gingrich—more often and more loudly than anyone else in American politics—who demanded terminological precision in public debate about the federal government's entitlement accounts. The Republican congressional caucus was proposing to restrict the growth of Medicare expenditures to 6.5 percent a year. President Clinton and his Democratic allies on the Hill were repeatedly denouncing that proposal as an actual "cut" in Medicare spending. Media types were too often adopting the latter usage as their own. And Gingrich was quite lathered up about the whole thing.

"We have had a shameful performance by the elite media," the Definer told a Republican women's conference in May 1996, to take but one of many, many examples. "To the best of my knowledge, not a single White House reporter has ever stopped the president and said, 'Mr. President, how can you say the word *cut* when it's a $2,500-per-year increase?' Not a single Washington White House reporter has said, 'Mr. President, isn't it just wrong to mislead 85-year-old people?'" That the president could stoop so low, Gingrich had elsewhere remarked, proved "how totally, morally bankrupt the modern Democratic party is."

Which brings us—totally, morally bankrupt-wise—back to the present, where a different political struggle over a long-term entitlement is just getting underway. Nowadays, as Fred Barnes reported in our December 20 issue, a Republican president is likely to propose a Social Security reform involving optional private investment accounts coupled with some sort of reduction in the rate of growth of future benefits. And Democrats, fixing on the slower rate of growth of future Social Security benefits, are already beginning to attack the plan as a devastating "cut" of Grandma's living expenses.

And Newt Gingrich, again, is quite lathered up about the whole thing. Except that this time, oddly enough, he seems to be reading President Clinton's old lines, rather than his own. "I can't imagine how you can sell a *benefit cut* in a partisan environment," he told the *Wall Street Journal* a few weeks ago, warning the White House that Republicans might lose control of Congress if they attempt to slow the growth of Social Security spending. 'Cause lookit, as Gingrich explained in a letter to the editor we ourselves had published not long before: There are just a couple of "basic facts" worth considering about Social Security politics. And the first one is: "A big cut in benefits is a big cut in benefits."

Funny. Never used to be. ♦

The Old Dying Babies Gambit

More ammo for Newt Gingrich, if he wants it: According to *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, "some of the steps the government is now taking or talking about—like cutting back further on entitlements"—would only serve to "aggravate" an existing "situation" that ought to be "simply unacceptable" in the modern United States. Mr. Kristof neglects to specify which current or prospective entitlement cuts he has in mind. And he is only slightly more specific about the general problem he believes those cuts would make worse, citing "a pattern of recent statistics dribbling out of the federal government suggesting that for those on the bottom in America, life in our new Gilded Age is getting crueler."

To his credit, however, Kristof's January 12 op-ed piece does manage to address one extremely specific example of the aforementioned ominous "pattern," a set of numbers he says were "buried in a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention" which, unfortunately, "didn't get much attention." Believe it or not, "here's a wrenching fact," Kristof tells us: "If the U.S. had an infant mortality rate as good as Cuba's, we would save an additional 2,212 American babies a year. . . . Babies are less likely to survive in America, with a health care system that we think is the best in the world,

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than in impoverished and autocratic Cuba."

Which would, indeed, be a "wrenching fact" if—at least the way Kristof implies—it were any kind of fact at all.

It's not, though. First off, the CDC document at issue, *Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2002*, isn't recent; it was published on February 11 of last year. Second, the infant mortality figures Kristof is belatedly wrenching himself over weren't "buried" in that report, and it strikes THE SCRAPBOOK as particularly embarrassing for a *New York Times* columnist to now complain that the numbers "didn't get much attention" when they came out. This, because the *Times*'s own Anahad O'Connor published a reasonably long story about the *Deaths* data the very next day. And, more embarrassing still, O'Connor's *Times* report: (1) very clearly identified the phenomenon that Kristof contends has been ignored ("U.S. Infant Mortality Rate Rises Slightly"); (2) very intelligently summarized CDC's conclusions about what's likely to have caused the change; and (3) thereby made it all but impossible for any intelligent human being to conclude, as Nicholas Kristof nevertheless has, that healthy American newborns are dying like flies because Republicans in Congress are stingy.

Nope, as Anahad O'Connor explained almost exactly a year ago, the CDC is inclined to attribute a slight recent uptick in American infant mortality to the increasing number of "high-risk pregnancies and births" produced by, among other things, "fertility treatments that have led to higher rates of multiple births" and "complications, including low-birth-weight babies" and "premature infants." And far from being associated with "poverty" in the "new Gilded Age," these riskier, more vulnerable deliveries appear, if anything, to be a consequence of affluence. Low-birth-weight natality, O'Connor pointed out, "climbed three times as fast in suburbs as they did in cities in the 1990s."

Bottom line: The United States now has a "higher infant mortality rate" than Cuba because in the United States doctors typically make heroic and phenomenally expensive efforts to deliver and save babies that are routinely miscarried or targeted for selective abortion in much of the rest of the world.

Maybe Nick Kristof should try being the Definer of Civilization instead. That job's open. ♦

This, They'll Correct, Though

An editor's note from the January 6 edition of the *New York Times*: "An obituary of the innovative comic-page illustrator Will Eisner yesterday included an imprecise comparison in some copies between his character the Spirit and others, including Batman. Unlike Superman and some other heroes of the comics, Batman relied on intelligence and skill, not supernatural powers."

Sounds like this Batman character might come in handy up on West 43rd Street. ♦

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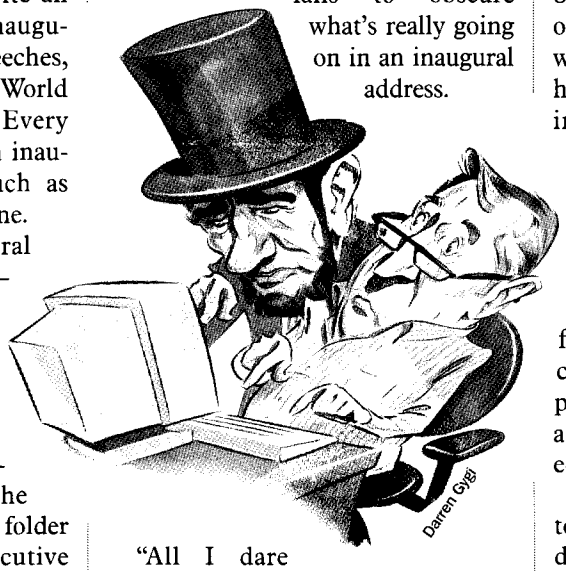
Casual

PHRASE-MAKERS

Like an idiot, I once took a break from the journalism business and spent a year writing presidential speeches. I wrote talking points for the annual Thanksgiving Day Turkey Pardon, a couple of commencement addresses, and long, meaty disquisitions on fiscal policy, regulatory reform, the health care system, and several other matters about which I know zero. I never got to write an inaugural address, though. Inaugurals are the Super Bowl of speeches, the Olympics of speeches, the World Series of Poker of speeches. Every speechwriter wants to write an inaugural address, almost as much as every politician wants to give one.

You can see why. Inaugural speeches are destined to last—or at least to last longer than dishwater comments offered up at a Head Start ceremony. Centuries after delivery they're still easy for the curious to lay hands on. My speechwriting days came before the Internet, but there used to be a folder in the library of the Old Executive Office Building, next door to the White House, that contained every inaugural address. It was prominently displayed and lavishly printed up, poised for casual reference or ready inspiration.

Sitting in the library with the folder open before me, I used to gobble up the inaugurals. It was hard to stop reading. Inaugural addresses are wonderfully revealing, with the immediacy you get only from the most resonant historical artifacts. In Woodrow Wilson's second inaugural, the messianism that proved his undoing stands naked to the world—more appealing than Woodrow Wilson standing naked to the world, but not by much. The supposedly rustic and untutored Andrew Jackson, in his second inaugural, draws a balance between states' rights and the moral necessity of the federal Union with the skill of a great essayist, a performance made all the more moving by the premonitory rumbles you hear of the terrible conflagration still 30 years away. Even the periphrasis typical of 18th- and 19th-century oratory, so gummy to the contemporary ear, fails to obscure what's really going on in an inaugural address.



"All I dare hope," Washington said in his first inaugural, "is that if, in executing this task, I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances, or by an affectionate sensibility to this transcendent proof of the confidence of my fellow-citizens, and have thence too little consulted my incapacity as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me, my error will be palliated by the motives which mislead me, and its consequences be judged by my country with some share of the partiality in which they originated." Translated to contemporary English this means, roughly, "If I mess up, I hope you cut me some slack." It's a declaration of personal modesty characteristic of Washington and also false, since few men in history had less to be modest about. Washington knew it and so did his listeners.

In a pleasing coincidence, the longest inaugural speech came from the man with the shortest presidency. William Henry Harrison served for only 31 days, several of them having been spent reciting his inaugural. By rough count it runs to over 8,000 words, even after a ruthless edit from Daniel Webster, but it's still a pleasure to read for its thoughtfulness and surprises, including, believe it or not, an argument for term limits. There are revelations too in the inaugural Ulysses S. Grant delivered at the beginning of his second, doomed term. Anyone who's read his autobiography knows how pacific the general was, but his inaugural shows a streak of unexpected self-pity. After mentioning his hard crawl up the ranks during the Civil War—"without asking promotion or command"—he announces that "throughout the war, and from my candidacy for my present office in 1868 to the close of the last presidential campaign, I have been the subject of abuse and slander scarcely ever equaled in political history."

Apparently he had already forgotten his former commander in chief, dead only eight years. Lincoln's second inaugural ("With malice toward none, with charity for all") is not only everyone's favorite but also, I suppose, the greatest presidential utterance. Good as the other speeches are, you read through them and then you turn the page and find Lincoln's, and you catch your breath as though you'd happened upon a beautiful painting or suddenly heard a sublime phrase of music moving through the air. "The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has his own purposes." And you think, "They don't make speechwriters like that anymore."

ANDREW FERGUSON

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On Education Reform, Let's Avoid False Choices

Kurt M. Landgraf
President & CEO, ETS

As a new presidential term begins and a new Congress convenes, policymakers face some of the most momentous issues in our nation's history. Education reform continues to be one of them.

From expanding No Child Left Behind to high school, to improving teacher quality and closing the achievement gap, public education is at a crossroads. The steps we take now will determine where we'll be in a generation.

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As debates over these issues take shape, we must avoid the traditional either/or formulation all too common in political and policy discussions: Either you're for holding schools accountable for student performance, or you're for more spending. Either you're for expanding opportunity to the many, or you're for concentrating on the potential of the few. Either teachers should master content, or they should have better teaching skills.

These are false choices that ill serve students, parents and the public. At ETS, we believe it is possible to pursue both accountability and efficiency; to pursue both equity and quality; to master both content and pedagogy.

Public opinion research conducted for ETS shows that Americans want reform to proceed. By more than 2-to-1, parents say they believe NCLB will improve public education. This insistence on reform has become the new middle ground in the education debate, and it forms the common ground on which policy should coalesce.

In the coming months, we'll be setting forth ETS's positions in three fundamental areas:

- ensuring that our schools are held accountable for student performance
- expanding access to educational opportunity
- improving teacher quality

By keeping the focus on education reform, and by avoiding the trap of false choices, we'll all be taking the right steps today for the generation of tomorrow.

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The Israel Factor

Reuel Marc Gerecht's list of the Bush administration's four options regarding Iran's nuclear program ("The Struggle for the Middle East," Jan. 3 / Jan. 10) omits a critical variable: Israel.

If Israel was willing to take preemptive action against Iraq's nuclear program in 1981, it is also likely to do so against Iran's—eliminating Gerecht's first two options of essentially doing nothing. The advantage of Israel's threatening a preemptive strike is that it might persuade the Europeans to adopt a tougher stance against Iran.

If this tactic fails, I suspect the Bush administration will be faced with either taking preemptive action itself or watching Israel do so.

Michael D. Chan
Los Angeles, CA

Oh, Cynthia!

I have lived in Georgia's fourth congressional district for over 20 years, and I think Matthew Continetti's insistence that Cynthia McKinney is a "progressive"—or anticipating where progressives are going—is simply false ("Cynthia McKinney (D-Conspiracy)," Jan. 3 / Jan. 10).

I am a Democrat and a progressive. In 1996 I voted for McKinney's Republican opponent—the only time I have ever gone for a Republican in my 32 years of voting. One of my professors at Emory, a 69-year-old liberal Democrat, also cast his first Republican vote in that election. Ditto for a 76-year-old neighbor, who had voted Democratic since FDR.

In short, few of us who accept the label "progressive" either voted for or respect Cynthia McKinney.

Michael Stephen Hollifield
Atlanta, GA

Matthew Continetti might be interested to know that with the exits of Zell Miller and Roy Barnes, Cynthia McKinney is now the most prominent and influential Democratic politician in Georgia. This helps explain why Republicans now control both U.S. Senate seats, the governor's office, and both houses of the state legislature.

If Atlanta TV stations keep showing McKinney's conspiracy-driven speeches, the Democrats will soon have about as much power in Georgia as they do in Utah.

William Bonner
Covington, GA

The Taiwan Two-Step

Regarding Greg Mastel's "Taiwan Gets No Respect" (Dec. 27): While it might seem logical to assume that Taiwan would benefit more from increased trade with the United States than from increased trade with China, that is a decidedly short-term view.

Entrepreneurial growth has long proven conducive to the development of governments based upon individual freedom. Government-owned economies founder, as we saw in the Soviet Union. Economies that are micromanaged by a government whose primary goal is the socialistic leveling of wealth hinder their own industrial competitiveness, as many European economies prove.

Taken from that perspective, several interesting considerations arise relative to the PRC. First, the individual freedoms that existed in Hong Kong prior to the British turnover have impacted relationships between the Chinese and their government on the mainland. The effects have been neither as strong nor as swift as one might hope, but they are visible.

Anyone who visits the "new" China quickly notices the subcurrent that underlies the rapid growth of individual entrepreneurship. It cannot continue without political change. Eventually, the need to maintain industrial growth will force the Chinese government to accord rights to its citizens that it would prefer to deny. This will happen because a continued denial of those rights will eventually produce an economic decline that might topple the government.

Taiwan has the ability both to accelerate this process and to grow its own economy more substantially through greater trade ties to the PRC. Two factors are important. First, over the long term, mainland China will be a larger market for Taiwan than for the United States. Second, the assimilation of Taiwan into the greater Chinese government is probably inevitable. And the infusion of Taiwan's democracy into China's already strongly capitalistic economic structure will accelerate the growth of Chinese political freedom.

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the weekly Standard

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, fourth week in August, and the second week in November) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Honoring Democracy

Last Tuesday's Oval Office interview appeared to be over. *Washington Times* editor in chief Wesley Pruden had thanked the president. But President Bush had something to add:

"If you want a glimpse of how I think about foreign policy read Natan Sharansky's book, *The Case for Democracy*. . . . For government, particularly—for opinion makers, I would put it on your recommended reading list. It's short and it's good. This guy is a heroic figure, as you know. It's a great book."

What a plug! But the praise is deserved. And it's good news that the president is so enthusiastic about Sharansky's work. It suggests that, despite all the criticism, and all the difficulties, the president remains determined to continue to lead the nation along the basic foreign policy lines he laid down in his first term. As with any foreign policy, there have been deviations—some reasonable, some unfortunate—from the basic course. As with any administration, there have been errors of judgment and failures of execution—some defensible, some indefensible. But the Bush/Sharansky path is both right and necessary. And with the Afghan and Palestinian elections just behind us, and the Iraqi election coming up, our progress along that path should become more visible.

Bush has eloquently explained the essence of his foreign policy many times, and he undoubtedly will do so again in his second inaugural address this week. But, as we await that speech, one quotation from Bush's recommended guide may be helpful. The following is from a July 2000 article by Sharansky—once a political prisoner in the Soviet Union, now a politician in Israel—quoted in *The Case for Democracy*:

> The same human rights principles that once guided me in the Soviet Union remain the cornerstone of my approach to the peace process. I am willing to transfer territory not because I think the Jewish people have less of a claim to Judea and Samaria than do the Palestinians, but because the principle of individual autonomy remains sacred to me—I do not want to rule another people. At the same time, I refuse to ignore the Palestinian Authority's violations of human rights because I remain convinced that a neighbor who tramples on the rights of its own people will eventually threaten the security of my people. . . . A genuinely "new" Middle East need not be a fantasy. But it will not be brought about by merely ceding lands to Arab dictators and by subsidizing regimes that undermine the rights of their own people. The only way to create real Arab-Israeli reconciliation is to press the Arab world to respect human rights. Israel must link its concessions to the degree of openness, transparency, and liberalization of its neighbors. For their part, Western leaders must not think the Arabs any less deserving of the freedom and rights that their own citizens enjoy—both for their sake and for ours.

True then, and true now, for Israel and for America.

There is more enlightened guidance in Sharansky's book. He comments in the preface, "During my long journey through the world of evil, I had discovered three sources of power: the power of an individual's inner freedom, the power of a free society, and the power of the solidarity of the free world." *The Case for Democracy* focuses on the latter two sources of power. Sharansky's earlier book, *Fear No Evil*, a memoir of his days as a dissident and a prisoner in the USSR, elaborates on the first source of power—the power of an individual's inner freedom. That book is well worth reading too.

For it is the power of citizens' inner freedom that gives them the strength to defend freedom in the world, and it is true inner freedom that is the fruit of that defense. Sharansky's inner freedom, acquired in the exercise of his extraordinary courage and understanding, made it possible for him to accept his conviction to the Gulag with equanimity. As he said on July 14, 1978, in his statement to the Soviet court that convicted him in a show trial:

> Five years ago, I submitted my application for exit to Israel. Now I am further than ever from my dream. It would seem to be cause for regret. But it is absolutely the other way around. I am happy. I am happy that I lived honorably, at peace with my conscience. I never compromised my soul, even under the threat of death.

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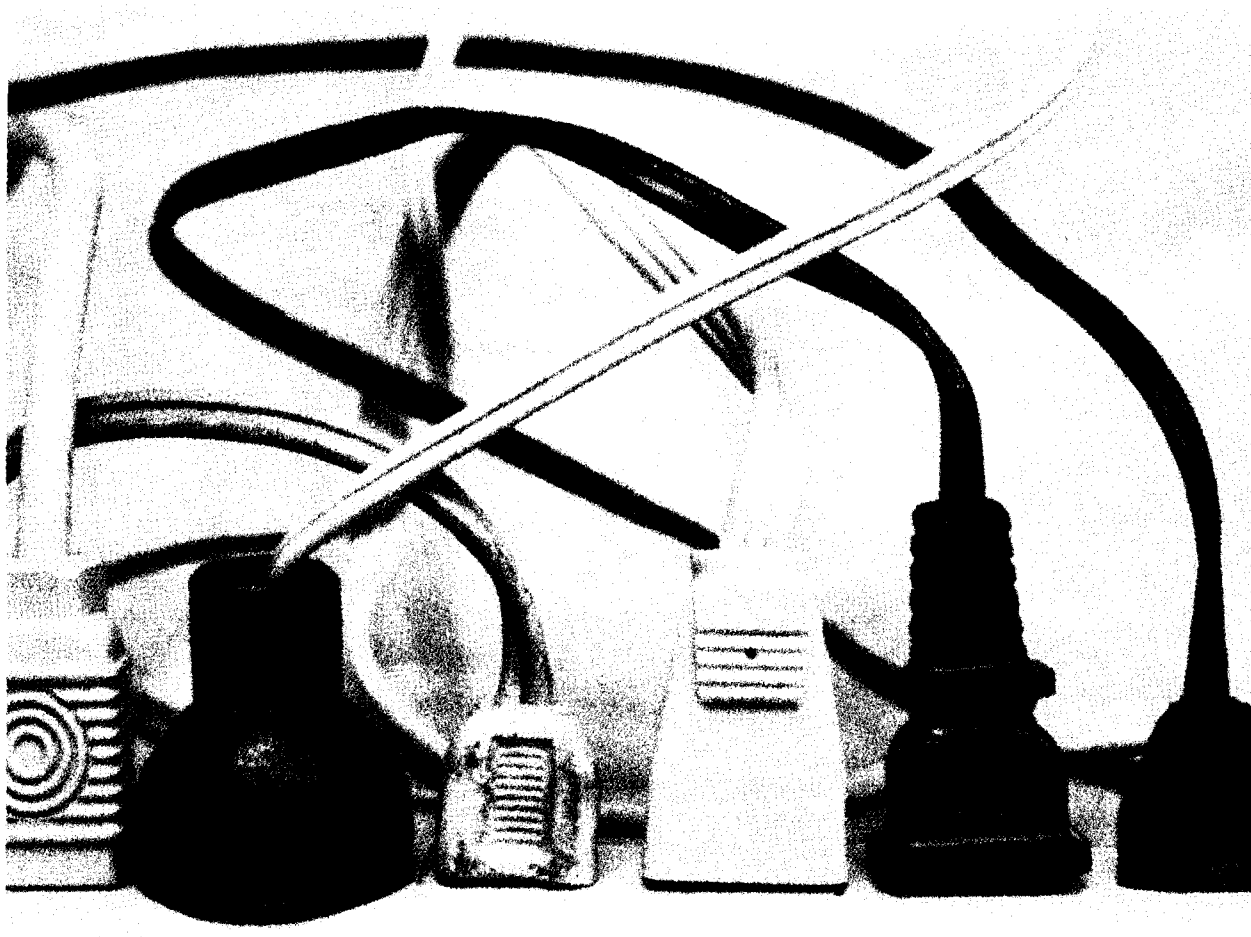

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Living honorably—surely that is the goal of a free people, both at home and abroad. President Bush will face many difficult foreign policy challenges in his second term. After consulting all complications of interest and calculation, he will surely want to repair, as Sharansky did, to the standard of acting honorably. As Churchill put it in his history of World War II, there is a "helpful guide" to nations facing difficult choices: "This guide is called honor."

"It is baffling to reflect," Churchill adds, "that what men call honor does not correspond always to Christian ethics. Honor is often influenced by that element of pride which plays so large a part in its inspiration. An exaggerated code of honor leading to the performance of utterly vain and unreasonable deeds could not be defended, however fine it might look." "Here, however," Churchill continues, writing of the choice Britain faced at Munich in September 1938, "the moment came when Honor pointed the path of Duty, and when also the right judgment of the facts at that time would have reinforced its dictates."

Today, in Iraq and beyond, honor points the path of duty, and the right judgment of the facts reinforces its dictates. The path of duty for us, as it was for Churchill and Sharansky, is the defense of liberty. As he takes the oath of office for the second time, having won a deserved reelection from the American people, this is Bush's challenge, and his mission.

—*William Kristol*

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An Emerging Reform Majority?

On Social Security, the White House seeks a third way around the third rail. BY FRED BARNES

IS A BIPARTISAN COALITION required to pass legislation that would allow individuals to invest their Social Security payroll taxes in stocks and bonds? Not really. Surely, the White House will endorse a Social Security reform plan that slows the growth of benefits by roughly 40 percent, right? Don't count on it. And won't Democrats be able to attack almost any reform proposal by President Bush with political impunity? Actually, obstructing Bush carries real risks. But as for all the talk about a new paradigm, doesn't Social Security still represent the third rail of politics—touch it and you get badly hurt? Well, we're going to see about that.

The point is that if you believed those nuggets of the conventional wisdom in Washington, you'd assume Bush's plan to reform Social Security is dead even before it's been unveiled. And you'd be wrong.

The prospects for enacting a reform bill this year are not exactly bright, but they aren't grim either. What are the exact odds of passage? Nobody knows. It depends on what the White House proposes or is willing to settle for. And that hasn't been decided, except to the extent that individual investment accounts must be the heart of the legislation. It also depends on how effectively the Bush team carries out its strategy in Congress.

Start with the strategy. The White House does intend to pursue bipartisanship, but of a distinctly Bush variety. That means rounding up all, or nearly all, the Republicans in the House and Senate, plus a few Democratic defectors. This is the only realistic approach. Most congressional Democrats oppose investment accounts, much less any conceivable Bush financing scheme that would make accounts feasible. So do their chief allies, the AARP and organized labor. Democratic senator Teddy Kennedy insisted last week that Bush wants to destroy the Social Security system simply because it's a great Democratic achievement. He'd oppose any measure freeing payroll taxes for investment accounts, but some Democratic senators have a different view. Which is good, because Bush will probably need 60 votes in the Senate—thus a few Democrats—because of budget rules.

"Pelosi is pulling out all the stops to intimidate Democrats" and prevent them from defecting, the Republican said. "So far, she's succeeding."

In the House, Bush doesn't need any Democrats, though it might be easier to attract a handful of Democrats in the Senate if some House Democrats break ranks first. So far, the only House Democrat to cosponsor a Republican reform bill is Allen Boyd of Florida, a moderate. One House Republican vigorously wooed a young Democratic reformer, but the Democrat backed away at the insistence of House minority leader Nancy Pelosi. "Pelosi is pulling out all the stops to intimidate Democrats" and prevent them from defecting, the Republican said. "So far, she's succeeding."

Republican unity in Congress may not be sufficient to win passage, but it is necessary. For the White House, the key task is to draft a Social Security proposal that will please or at least be acceptable to three Republican factions. The first faction favors dumping the "wage index" used to calculate a beneficiary's initial monthly payment. This would slow the growth of benefits by 40 percent over the next few decades while keeping benefits at the current, inflation-adjusted level. The White House initially looked favorably on this. But it's moved away from the idea in the face of noisy objections that a 40 percent "cut" is a nonstarter.

The second faction has vigorously opposed any such reduction in benefits. Their objections—the public ones, anyway—have been voiced by former House speaker Newt Gingrich, ex-presidential candidates Jack Kemp and Steve Forbes, and others who relish investment accounts but fear a bill that trims benefits in any fashion would lose. A large but unknown number of congressional Republicans agree with them. The White House was inclined to dismiss their complaints, but now recognizes it needs the Gingrich group. Enlisting them won't be easy.

The third group consists of those Republicans who'd rather the whole matter go away. They disagree with Bush's claim that "the crisis" in Social Security is now. Republican representative Rob Simmons of Connecticut, a moderate, made himself famous for a day last week when he was quoted on the front page of the *Washington Post* disputing Bush. "When does the program go belly up?" he asked. "2042. I will be dead by then." However, unpersuaded Republicans like Simmons are likely to fall in line behind the president, given that he's the head of their party.

All this leaves the White House in search of what Republican representa-

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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tive Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, a key player on the Social Security issue, calls a "third way" solution. The White House has a month to six weeks to develop one. The president, by being unspecific about what he will ultimately propose, has left himself negotiating room. Currently, the White House is inching toward a proposal that would slow the growth of benefits slightly (but nothing close to 40 percent), either raise the $90,000 ceiling on income subject to payroll taxes (but far, far short of the $200,000 recommended by Republican senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina), or not raise it at all and create investment accounts funded by 2 to 4 percent of income now paid in payroll taxes.

Of course, details would be negotiable on Capitol Hill.

That basic scheme may not thrill Republicans, but they'll have to embrace some version of it to achieve the one goal they all agree on—individual investment accounts. On this, there has indeed been a paradigm shift. Every poll I've seen shows strong support except among the elderly for such accounts. A Zogby poll cited by Gingrich in his new book, *Winning the Future*, found that 68 percent of Americans favor "changing the system" to allow for investment accounts. Also, prominent Republicans—Sen. John Sununu of New Hampshire is one—who've run on investment accounts have won. So Social Security is no longer an untouchable third rail.

Bush can't ignore Democratic attacks entirely. By focusing on benefit "cuts" or bigger budget deficits caused by Social Security reform, Democrats could frighten queasy Republicans. But obstructionism hasn't served Democrats well in recent elections. Opposing Bush's plan for a Department of Homeland Security cost them the 2002 election. Blocking judicial nominees was critical in Tom Daschle's defeat last year. Voting against $87 billion for the Iraq war doomed John Kerry's presidential bid. Opposing Social Security reform may be less risky. But maybe not. ♦

An Alternative Inaugural Address

What if George W. Bush weren't a compassionate conservative . . . BY P. J. O'ROURKE

MY FELLOW AMERICANS, I had intended to reach out to all of you and bring a divided nation together. But I changed my mind. America isn't divided by political ethos or ethnic origin. America isn't divided by region or religion. America is divided by jerks. Who wants to bring a bunch of jerks together with the rest of us? Let them stew in Berkeley, Boston, and Ann Arbor.

The media say that I won the election on the strength of moral values. If the other fellow had become president, would the media have said that he won the election on the strength of *immoral* values? For once the media would have been right.

We are all sinners. But jerks revel in their sins. You can tell by their reaction to the Ten Commandments. Post those Ten Commandments in a courthouse or a statehouse, in a public school or a public park, and the jerks go crazy. Why is that? Christians believe in the Ten Commandments. So do Muslims. Jews, too, obviously. Show the Ten Commandments to Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians, or to people with just good will and common sense and nobody says, "Whoa! That's all wrong!"

But jerks take issue with every one of the Ten Commandments. Jerks are particularly offended by the first two Commandments. Of course people of faith, decent people, differ on interpretations of the first two Commandments. For example, we don't all agree about the meaning of "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." However, we do all agree about "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them" when them is Freud, Marx, and Dan Rather.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." How many times, over the last few months, have we heard, "Ohmigod, ohmigod, ohmigod, I can't believe George Bush won"?

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Let's be fair about this. We did see a lot of white, non-Hispanic Democrats in churches in 2004. But they were all running for president. And the churches were inner-city black churches. I happen to know that there are churches in the white, non-Hispanic suburbs where these Democrats live. Apparently jerks can't find them.

"Honor thy father and thy mother." Are telling lies about a bankrupt Social Security system and trying to block its privatization reform ways to do this?

"Thou shalt not kill." Why, in the opinion of jerks, is it wrong to kill a baby but all right to kill a baby that's so little he hasn't been born yet? And why do the same jerks who favor abortion oppose the death penalty? We can imagine people so full of loving kindness that they can accept neither the abortionist nor the executioner. We can even imagine people so cold-hearted that they embrace them both. But it takes a real jerk to argue in favor of killing perfect innocents and letting Terry Nichols live.

"Thou shalt not commit adul-

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tery." The jerks have begun praising marriage lately. But only if the bride and groom each have a beard.

"Thou shalt not steal." In 2004 the United States government spent $2,318,800,000,000. Thus every American benefited from $7,919.37 worth of federal services. Let me ask the jerks something. Say you're average jerks, a "blended family" of four. Did you pay $31,677.48 in taxes last year? If you didn't, you took things from other Americans. What did you give in return?

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Especially not in return for vast wealth, abundant prizes, and lavish praise from fellow jerks. I'm talking to you, Michael Moore.

And then there is the Tenth Commandment. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." The Ten Commandments are God's basic rules about how we should live—a brief list of sacred obligations and solemn moral precepts. The first nine Commandments concern theological principles and social law. But then, right at the end, is "Don't envy your buddy's cow." How did that make the top ten? What's it doing there? Why would God, with just ten things to tell Moses, choose as one of those things jealousy about the starter mansion with in-ground pool next door?

Yet think how important the Tenth Commandment is to a community, to a nation, indeed to a presidential election. If you want a mule, if you want a pot roast, if you want a cleaning lady, don't be a jerk and whine about what the people across the street have—go get your own.

The Tenth Commandment sends a message to all the jerks who want redistribution of wealth, higher taxes, more government programs, more government regulation, more government, less free enterprise, and less freedom. And the message is clear and concise: Go to hell. ♦

Torturing the Evidence

The truth about the doctors at Guantanamo.

BY HEATHER MAC DONALD

Hyde Park, February 13, 2005 (AP)—The Culinary Institute of America yesterday denounced participation of military nutritionists in torture of Guantanamo detainees. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, nutritionists on the Cuban naval base assisted in the preparation of Halal meals for detainees, which were sometimes served after stressful interrogation sessions. "A deep-fried falafel burger, when a detainee's blood pressure is elevated, may be the difference between a mere violation of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime," said Roy Facino, spokesperson for the Culinary Institute.

SUCH FURTHER exposés of professional complicity in "torture" are undoubtedly just around the corner, now that the *New England Journal of Medicine* has condemned the participation of doctors in terrorist interrogations. M. Gregg Bloche, a medical ethicist at Georgetown and Johns Hopkins, and Jonathan H. Marks, a biological anthropologist at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, announce in the January 6 issue of the *Journal* that doctors who oversaw detainee interrogations "breached the laws of war" and probably engaged in "torture." This accusation echoes an earlier complaint by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The press has gleefully picked up the story as more proof of detainee torture.

So what did the military physicians and psychiatrists actually do? Review interrogation plans to make sure that they posed no health risks to detainees. Observe interrogations in process to make sure they posed no health risks to detainees. Provide interrogators with access to detainees' medical records so the interrogators could put together plans that exploited detainees' psychological weaknesses without posing a health risk. Allegedly consult on interrogation plans to maximize the chance of getting information without compromising detainee care. Bloche and Marks provide little backing for this last claim. The interrogators I have spoken to are unaware of any such involvement and say that the doctors at Guantanamo confined themselves exclusively to overseeing medical care. Psychiatrists were involved with interrogators, however, advising on detainees' mental states. They might inform intelligence officers that Ahmed was crazy as a loon, and would not be responsive to interrogation, or that Khalid was too emotionally fragile for questioning without Zoloft, or that Zacarias was faking his mental disability.

The "doctors who torture" story conjures up images of Nazi doctors fiendishly experimenting on concentration camp victims or sadistically calibrating levels of unbearable pain. But the actual interrogation techniques that were used in Guantanamo Bay and Iraq do not come close to torture: "dietary manipulation," such as putting a detainee on vacuum-sealed Army rations, rather than hot meals, with a minimum base of bread and water, sleep manipulation, and isolation, among others. The military began experimenting with such "stress techniques" only after it became clear that traditional Army methods of questioning lawful prisoners of war,

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which play on homely emotions such as pride or homesickness, were ineffective in getting war on terror detainees to talk. The stress methods aimed to increase a detainee's sense of uncertainty about the interrogator's limits, and thus to persuade him to cooperate. They did not seek to produce pain or harm. If an authorized interrogation had injured a detainee, and it came out that interrogators had ignored his medical history, the human rights advocates would undoubtedly have accused the Bush administration of medical malpractice and neglect as vociferously as they are now accusing medical professionals of complicity in torture.

Bloche and Marks criticize the military doctors for breaching the privacy of a detainee's medical records, thus undermining "detainees' trust in their doctors, a prerequisite for adequate care." But detainees were told that their medical information was not protected. And the notion of scrupulously preserving patient confidentiality in a war zone is absurd. The alleged "undermining of trust" that the authors predict does not, in any case, seem to have had an adverse effect: The prisoners received better medical care than ever before in their lives; they gained weight, and were treated for longstanding ailments. One detainee received half a million dollars worth of surgery to correct a childhood deformity. After the operation, interrogators approached him to ask if maybe now he'd be willing to cooperate. "Death to America!" was the only response.

Without question, some war on terror detainees have been abused, some have even died in custody. But that abuse was in violation of official policy, not pursuant to it. The goal of detainee operations has always been humane treatment; the bureaucracy that quickly evolved in Guantanamo Bay and the Pentagon to guard against abuse was mind-boggling in its complexity. That oversight mechanism broke down completely in Abu Ghraib, under the pressures of the Iraqi insurgency, to the eternal shame of the military.

But it would be a grave mistake to make Abu Ghraib the symbol for interrogation in the war on terror. This is exactly what administration critics are doing, however—and successfully. The real agenda behind the media's torture narrative, which holds that the abuse of detainees was systemic and the inevitable result of denying Geneva Convention coverage to terrorists, is to delegitimate interrogation. Bloche and Marks object to any participation of doctors in crafting interrogation plans. That objection would be understandable if torture were involved. But keeping a terror suspect up past his bedtime for questioning is not torture.

For the moment, gathering intelligence from detainees remains a legal concomitant of the war on terror. If military doctors have monitored and possibly helped craft lawful interrogation plans, they are committing no war crimes but are serving their country with honor. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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Right from the Beginning

Bush's first inaugural address was prescient.

BY TERRY EASTLAND

The first inauguration

Reuters / CORBIS / Win McNamee

THE WORLD CHANGED on September 11, and with it the Bush presidency—but not as much as you may think. True, its priorities shifted dramatically, with the war on terrorism taking precedence over all else. But much of what this presidency has become was there in the beginning—indeed, when George W. Bush, just sworn in as the 43rd president, delivered his inaugural address.

The speech assumed a presidency that would center on domestic issues. Its big theme concerned "our democratic faith," rooted in freedom, and how we need to live up to it. "While many of our citizens prosper," Bush said, "others doubt the promise, even the justice of our country." We need to make America "more" American, he said. And toward that end he declared: "Today we affirm a new commitment to live out our nation's promise through civility, courage, compassion, and character." These four Cs provided the basic structure of the address. And in discussing each, the president dealt mainly with matters within our borders.

Bush defined civility as "the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos," and said "this commitment" leads to "shared accomplishment." Thus must parents "turn the hearts of children toward knowledge and character."

Regarding courage, Bush said we must show this virtue "in a time of blessing"—note well, he did not say a time of danger—by "confronting problems instead of passing them on to future generations." The problems he listed first were all here at home—involving education, Social Security, Medicare, and the economy (in need of tax reduction).

Regarding compassion, Bush said we needed this virtue if we were going to address "deep, persistent poverty" and help children at risk and others in "hopeless" situations. He said compassion wasn't the work just of government but also of the nation, and he hinted at—without declaring its name—his faith-based initiative, so-called because of its reliance on religious charities to provide social services.

The fourth and final C was character, and here Bush discussed "private character" in terms of "personal responsibility," "civic duty," "fairness," "acts of decency," and even love. Not incidentally, Bush criticized the self-regarding character of his own boomer generation by observing that "we find the fullness of life not only in options, but in commitments," including those to "children and community." Recalling a theme of ancient political philosophy, one embraced by the Founders, Bush observed that "our public interest depends on private character." He asked Americans to seek "a common good beyond your comfort" and "to serve your nation, beginning with your neighbor."

That was an apt appeal, given the speech's domestic focus. But when you reread the text today, from this side of 9/11, what stands out are the few passages on national security and foreign affairs.

Of course, it is ironic that Bush said (calling for courage) that "we will build our defenses beyond challenge, lest weakness invite challenge"—for at that time we were weaker than most of us knew, as 9/11 emphatically demonstrated. But Bush also said this: "We will confront weapons of mass destruction, so that a new century is spared new horrors"; and, "We will meet aggres-

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sion and bad faith with resolve and strength."

While we know now that terrorists without WMD can bring about horrors, as 9/11 (and 3/11, in Spain) showed, we also know that the president did confront WMD—actually the "bad faith" regarding WMD demonstrated over many years by Saddam Hussein. And he confronted "aggression" with the swift military response in Afghanistan and, more generally, with the development of antiterrorism policies that have included the creation of the Department of Homeland Security.

It's apparent now that those sentences were a sure indication of the fundamental ways in which the president conceived his responsibility for the nation's security. Post-9/11 doctrine—including preemption—was built on those foundations.

Bush also said in his first inaugural, "The enemies of liberty and our country should make no mistake: America remains engaged in the world by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favors freedom." Today it would be odd to say, "America remains engaged in the world," given our very heavy engagement. Yet what bears noting here is how Bush understood our engagement when he took office—in terms of our own history and choice. And in behalf of not just any balance of power—Bush was not a mere realist—but one that sides with freedom.

If you ask why America should favor freedom in the world, Bush actually set forth at least part of the answer in the speech. The president noted that all people are created "equal in His image." He didn't digress into a discussion of the rights of nature and nature's God, as the Declaration of Independence puts it, yet his address obviously assumed the existence of those rights—rights that everyone has simply by virtue of being human. And the speech showed an awareness that in many places around the world people are unable to exercise their rights—they lack what we have and they ought to have, freedom. Bush spoke approvingly of the fact that freedom and democracy are "taking root in many nations." And he said, "If our country does not lead the cause of freedom, it will not be led." The implication is that without American leadership, the cause of freedom will wither.

Bush didn't say that our country should lead the cause of democracy as such. But it's clear that for him the two causes were entwined. After all, he said that the democratic faith "is the inborn hope of our humanity." It's not surprising that after 9/11 Bush should have developed a "forward-strategy of freedom," as he called it in the fall of 2003, one that seeks the spread of democracy to countries ruled by despots and theocrats.

In his second inaugural, Bush will have the opportunity to sound what have emerged as the great themes of his presidency, those of freedom and democracy. It's apparent how he might speak of those themes in relation to Iraq and the Middle East generally. But it's also evident that many of the domestic policies he wants to advance can be framed in terms of freedom—that is, of the freedom of each individual to make certain basic choices, such as how he would like to invest for retirement. Not incidentally, the Bush domestic agenda is about not only freedom but also virtue—indeed, some of the very virtues the president highlighted in his first inaugural. The "Ownership Society," as he has described it, contemplates an America in which individuals are less dependent on government and more self-reliant, more involved in their communities.

Bush is now halfway through a presidency that aspires to greatness in part because of events of world-historical magnitude, but in part, too, because of his convictions and ambition. As one White House aide told me, "The president doesn't like small ball." That's why, notwithstanding all the big balls now in play, it might be wise to prepare for another one or two to be thrown in. ♦

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Ukraine's Reaganite First Lady

From the Reagan Revolution to the Orange Revolution. BY BRUCE BARTLETT

A REMARKABLE ELECTION took place in Ukraine on December 26. After the ruling party stole the November 21 presidential vote, massive street protests forced a new runoff, in which the rightful winner, Viktor Yushchenko, finally prevailed.

Although I have neither Ukrainian blood nor any special interest in foreign affairs, I have followed events in that country closely because a dear friend of mine, Katherine Chumachenko, is married to Yushchenko and about to become first lady of Ukraine.

Leading up to the election, I was called by Russian "reporters" looking for information on Kathy, or Katya, as she prefers today. I should say that they were looking for dirt, because the Russian press and its counterparts in Ukraine have been telling terrible lies about her for some time, saying that she is a CIA agent and other untruths designed solely to undermine her husband's political support.

I know that these things are untrue because I was intimately involved in several of her career moves, which are now portrayed as some sort of nefarious plot to move Kathy into a position of power in Ukraine. If anyone is responsible, I am; not the CIA.

Bruce Bartlett is a senior fellow with the National Center for Policy Analysis in Dallas.

When I first met Kathy in 1987, she was working for the State Department in the human rights bureau. We met at a Heritage Foundation event where John Podhoretz, now a columnist for the *New York Post* and a WEEKLY STANDARD contributing editor, was speaking. Shortly thereafter, I went to work in the White House in the Office of Policy Development, headed by Gary Bauer. The Office of Public Liaison (OPL) was headed by Rebecca Range (née Gernhardt), whom I had known since my first days on Capitol Hill, when she was working for the late John Ashbrook, the conservative congressman from Ohio. (She is now married to Rep. Christopher Cox, whom she met when he was working in the White House counsel's office for President Reagan.)

Reuters / CORBIS / Anatoly Medzyk

Viktor and Kateryna Yushchenko in Kiev, November 21, 2004

Public Liaison is the White House's outreach office, which maintains contacts with groups and organizations viewed as politically important. In the Reagan White House, one of these groups was the Eastern Europeans, whose homelands still suffered under Communist tyranny and Soviet control. The Ukrainians were a key member of this coalition.

Shortly after I got to the White House, a position in OPL opened up for someone to work with the "captive nations," as they were called. I pushed hard with my friend Becky to hire Kathy for the position and I think it helped. She was hired and we were able to work together for a year or so. Although Kathy's main interest was Ukraine, she was equally supportive of people from the Baltic States, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and other enslaved countries. They all understood that they would sink or swim together.

Toward the end of the Reagan administration, I moved over to the Treasury Department, where I was deputy assistant secretary for economic policy. The executive secretary—a job that involved managing the department's official correspondence and the paper flow in and out of the secretary's office—was a woman named Emily Walker, who hired Kathy as her deputy. So, once again, Kathy and I were able to work together. But after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, I could see that Kathy was becoming agitated about what might happen in Ukraine. While it seemed clear that most of Eastern Europe would soon free itself from the Soviet yoke, it was not at all certain that Ukraine would also be able to do so, since its position as a Russian vassal long predated the Soviet Union.

Kathy was also too smart to be

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content in what was essentially a bureaucratic position, and she looked to move on. Again, I was able to help. A friend of mine, David Malpass, had just become head of the Republican staff of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, where I had previously been executive director, and was looking for someone to work on issues relating to what were called transitional economies. I recommended Kathy and she was hired. (David is now chief global economist for the investment bank Bear, Stearns & Co. in New York.)

Toward the end of 1991, Ukraine declared its independence, and there was no stopping Kathy from being part of it. Although born in Chicago to Ukrainian parents, she was always more Ukrainian in some ways than those born in Ukraine. She had been raised to speak Ukrainian and was thoroughly steeped in that nation's culture and history. And with a master's degree in business administration from the University of Chicago, she knew that she could help her people recover and prosper in a free economy.

Kathy left the JEC and began traveling back and forth to Kiev, where she hoped to establish some sort of business. But the situation was very precarious, even for someone with family there. For example, I recall her telling me that she could not buy a car because auto theft was rampant. But for less than a car payment, she was able to hire a full-time car and driver. She told me that her driver slept in the car to prevent it from being stolen.

Having studied Soviet economics, I was much less optimistic than she was that Ukraine would easily throw off the legacy of socialism. I urged her to get a position with a Western company, where she would at least be paid in dollars rather than rapidly depreciating Ukrainian currency.

As it happened, another old friend of mine named Clifford Lewis, now chairman and CEO of Currenex in New York, had just gone to work for KPMG, the big accounting and consulting firm, which had gotten a U.S. government contract for work in Ukraine helping to train the people there in Western methods of banking and accounting.

Kathy was obviously perfect to run the Ukrainian operation, and I was able to put her and Cliff together. She was soon working for KPMG under the direction of economist Rudy Penner, who had previously been director of the Congressional Budget Office.

Although Ukraine became independent, it took a long time before it was able to shed its Communist legacy. I recall Kathy telling the story of a reception in Kiev, where she struck up a conversation with one of the attendees. To her surprise, he knew all about her. It turned out that he had worked for the Ukrainian KGB and had been assigned to follow her career, since she was one of the more prominent Ukrainians in the United States. Kathy asked him what he was doing now, and he said he was running for the parliament—against one of her cousins, in fact.

Among the organizations KPMG consulted with was the Ukrainian central bank, whose deputy director was Viktor Yushchenko, now president-elect of Ukraine. He and Kathy married in 1998, before he was named prime minister, and they now have three children.

I haven't seen Kathy since before her marriage, so I have no personal knowledge of their relationship. But knowing her as I do, I think it says a great deal for the new president of Ukraine that he won her heart. ♦

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Political Bias? What Political Bias?

The failure of CBS's investigative panel

By John Podhoretz

After spending three months on an investigation that must have rung up hundreds of thousands of dollars in billable hours, the team of lawyers hired by CBS to investigate its scandalously spurious report about George W. Bush's long-ago National Guard service finally concluded last week that CBS shouldn't have aired the September 8 broadcast at all. Former attorney general Dick Thornburgh and former Associated Press chief Louis D. Boccardi, who led the investigative panel, declared that there had simply been too many questions about the veracity of the supposedly bombshell documents on which it relied.

In other words, the Thornburgh-Boccardi team said little more than CBS News had already acknowledged all the way back on September 20, the very day the two men were first asked to undertake their investigation. Aside from some fascinating tidbits here and there in the course of its 224 pages, the report adds little to the storehouse of knowledge about the libelous hit job on the president—a storehouse of knowledge that was already nearing capacity within a mere 18 hours of the broadcast itself.

Stockholders in Viacom, the parent company of CBS, may want to grill network president Leslie Moonves about fiduciary responsibility. Not because CBS has been forever tainted by the scandal, though it surely has been. Simply put, there was no reason for Moonves to spend half a million dollars of the network's money on a report that could have been written for free by an intern with a dial-up Internet connection and a decent knowledge of how to use Google effectively.

A brief recap: Just after 8 P.M. Eastern time on September 8, 2004, Dan Rather reported on *60 Minutes* that CBS possessed documents written in 1972 and 1973 by George W. Bush's superior officer in the Texas Air National Guard. The documents, procured by superstar producer Mary Mapes, indicated that young Dubya had defied a direct order from his superior—an enormously serious charge to level against a commander in chief in a time of war. CBS posted photographs of the documents on its website. Less than four hours later, at 11:59 P.M., an Atlanta lawyer named Harry MacDougald dropped a comment onto a long chain of complaints about the show on the conservative website *freerepublic.com*. (It doesn't cost anything to read *freerepublic.com*.)

MacDougald said he believed the memos were forgeries because they appeared to be typographical anachronisms. His cursory examination of them revealed that they were proportionally spaced—like this very line of type you're reading right now. But while proportional spacing is something that word-processing programs on personal computers do as a matter of course, conventional typewriters in use in 1972 could not do it at all. (MacDougald didn't charge anyone for his analysis.)

Two people emailed his remark to another conservative website, *powerlineblog.com*, which gave it wider distribution early the next morning. (*Power Line* is run free of charge.) A few hours after that, a jazz musician and website designer named Charles Johnson printed out one of the CBS files and retyped the text on his own computer using the default settings of Microsoft Word. When he printed out the CBS file and then his own Microsoft Word file and layered one on top of the other, Johnson discovered they were identical. Later, Johnson went to the trouble of making a little animated movie showing how the documents blended together exactly and posted it on his website, *littlegreenfootballs.com*. (The price Johnson charged to watch his movie: Nothing.)

Johnson posted his finding on *littlegreenfootballs.com* at 1:24 P.M., September 9. This was nearly irrefutable evidence that a supposed 1972 memo had actually been typed on a computer using modern word-processing software. A mere 18 hours after the broadcast, CBS was (in the now immortal capitalized word of the network's own chief PR flack Gil Schwartz) "TOAST."

John Podhoretz is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard. *He last wrote on "Dan Rather's Day of Reckoning."*

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Despite Schwartz's appropriately hysterical warning (in an internal September 10 email reproduced in the Thornburgh-Boccardi report), CBS had committed itself to an aggressive self-defense, with Rather hotly defending the story on the *CBS Evening News* and his producer Mary Mapes doing follow-up reports intended to buttress the case for the documents. The network remained in this snarling self-defense mode for 11 days, even as growing layers of evidence—most of it still being produced free of charge by people releasing their analyses on blogs—continued to buttress the unassailable conclusion that the documents had been fabricated.

When CBS finally announced it could no longer stand behind the broadcast on September 20, it appeared that the network's decision to conduct an aggressive self-defense had come to a proper end—that it had been humbled by its calamitous conduct and was prepared to make a clean breast of its mistakes. But it's clear from the report released last week that CBS's aggressive self-defense has continued, albeit in a new and clever form. The network hired supposedly independent outside examiners, but whether consciously or not, its two Wise Men turned out to be shills for CBS.

The network hired outside examiners, but whether consciously or not, its two Wise Men turned out to be shills for CBS.

Just as their report tells us nothing we didn't already know back in September, it similarly finds no fault with CBS News beyond the blame the network laid upon itself in the course of its apology on September 20. At the time, CBS did not admit that the documents were fabrications, only that they could not be authenticated. Last week's report featured a precise echo of that explanation.

"Based on what we now know," the network said of the broadcast, "CBS News cannot prove that the documents are authentic, which is the only acceptable journalistic standard to justify using them in the report. We should not have used them. That was a mistake, which we deeply regret." For their part, Thornburgh and Boccardi announced they were "not able to reach a definitive conclusion as to the authenticity of the . . . documents."

According to the report, the problem wasn't exactly that Mapes and Company perpetrated a fraud. Instead, the problem was really one of carelessness. They didn't properly establish the "chain of custody" of the documents. They didn't pay enough attention to the inability of document experts to verify those documents. And they kept on defending themselves on the air even after the controversy began swirling around the documents. "If you're looking for a villain in this story, we have one," Thornburgh said on PBS last week. "It's haste; the haste with which this program was put together short-cut a lot of the necessary vetting that had to be done in order to authenticate the whole process."

This is a preposterous line of argument. The problem with the story had nothing to do with the purity or lack thereof of the reporting process—and anyway there is no such thing as a reporting process. If the documents had not been exposed as fabrications, Mary Mapes and CBS News would still have made every mistake for which they are tasked in the report—and yet they would have been garlanded, hailed, rewarded with journalism prizes. The haste for which they are now being attacked would instead have been considered wondrously aggressive competitiveness. And they might have taken home the ultimate prize—the knowledge that their reporting had brought down a presidency.

If all they are guilty of is carelessness, excessive haste, then why did Mapes and three other CBS executives involved in the matter deserve to be fired? Why couldn't they just have been reprimanded, scolded, suspended, given a spanking? Surely such respected professionals can be forgiven an honest lapse in procedural judgment, even on a highly sensitive matter.

After all, doing a story on George W. Bush's National Guard service wasn't exactly controversial. There had been dozens of stories on the matter in the mainstream media all year. And the documents weren't the only new aspect of the CBS story. Rather and Mapes did get an influential Texas politician named Ben Barnes to say on camera that he had intervened to land George W. Bush a slot in the Air National Guard back in 1968. That was a sleazy and unverifiable claim on its own, as Barnes spent most of that year in Switzerland, is an admitted liar, and was one of the biggest fundraisers for John Kerry. But it was new for network TV.

The problem with the story wasn't that it was rushed to air. The problem with the story wasn't that it violated journalistic protocols. The problem was that the story was a lie based on a fraud, and a conveniently timed lie at that—coming as it did only eight weeks before the nation was to go to the polls. And the lie was laid out before the world for all to see in a matter of hours.

The documents weren't exposed as *possible* fabrications. They were exposed as *undeniable* fabrications. Why is this so hard for CBS and for Thornburgh-Boc-

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cardi to accept? Because once you accept their spuriousness, you can't stop there. You have to ask the question: Why would everybody at CBS fall for such crude forgeries—forgeries so blatant that a lawyer with no particular expertise in document verification could spot them a few hours after the fact?

The report reveals that Mary Mapes had every reason to be skeptical about the provenance of the documents. She procured them from a source with an axe to grind against George W. Bush. She had located the source with help from the editor of a hysterically anti-Bush website. She told her source, Bill Burkett, that she was worried the documents were a "political dirty trick." She hired two document examiners who told her they had grave misgivings about the documents. Despite all this, Mapes barreled forward.

Surely she didn't want to end her career in disgrace. Surely she didn't want to become famous as the perpetrator of a gigantic fraud. She went ahead with the story the way a prosecutor will go ahead with an indictment based on evidence that isn't rock-solid. She went with her gut. Now, why would Mary Mapes's gut tell her the documents were real? We learn from the Thornburgh-Boccardi report that she had for years been operating on the assumption that Bush's service in the National Guard was dirty—long before the explosion of Bush National Guard-bashing led by Democratic National Committee chairman Terry McAuliffe in February 2004.

Mapes's superiors knew before the story aired that her reporting was slanted against Bush in an obvious and undisguised manner.

She had been hoping to do a story on his service as long ago as 1999, and used a very telling turn of phrase in a memo on the subject that year to her boss at the time (cc'ed to Dan Rather). "In his military career," Mapes wrote, "Bush was truly born on third base." Mapes was consciously applying to Dubya a famously vicious crack made in 1988 against his father by the colorful Texas populist pol Jim Hightower, who said that the elder George Bush was "a man who was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple." It's more than fair to infer from this that Mapes had been swimming in the seas of Bush hatred for many years before she got her hands on Bill Burkett's fabricated documents. She went to work with a freelance producer on the Burkett story who said excitedly in an email that Burkett had "information that could possibly change the momentum of an election"—and there is no indication that Mapes disagreed with him about his interpretation.

She believed the forgeries were real because she wanted to believe the forgeries were real. Indeed, she still believes they are real. In a statement last week, she said "the segment presented to the American people facts they were free to accept or reject, and that as those facts were presented, there was nothing that was false or misleading." Mapes thereby revealed herself to be a patsy, a mark, a victim of the Big Con. Viewers of the great 1973 movie *The Sting*, which introduced the concept of the Big Con, will recall that the secret of this ultimate confidence game is that the mark must never come to know that he was played. He must continue to believe the game was the real thing.

Everybody else at CBS seemed to take Mapes's word for it that the documents were kosher. But here's the thing: Mapes's superiors knew before the story aired that her reporting was slanted against Bush in an obvious and undisguised manner. The evidence for this is that Mapes's superiors took the unusual step of editing the segment themselves to remove a vociferous personal attack on Bush by David Hackworth, the decorated Vietnam veteran who knew absolutely nothing about the Texas Air National Guard or the documents or much of anything else about the future president's military service.

The inclusion and removal of the Hackworth remarks is the smoking gun here. By editing Hackworth out, CBS News president Andrew Heyward (who kept his job) and his deputy Betsy West (who lost hers) were not trying to provide balance to an unbalanced report. They were trying to hide the motivating animus behind the segment. With Hackworth in, they would not have had what the CIA used to call "plausible deniability"—the ability to pretend that the only reason for doing the story was to get the facts out.

On the matter of liberal bias in the mainstream media, Thornburgh and Boccardi chose to conclude that they did "not find a basis to accuse those who investigated, produced, vetted or aired the Segment of having a political bias." In this way, they sought to continue CBS's effort at plausible deniability, which was very nice of them but also profoundly stupid of them. In the end, they come off like Jimmy Durante in the legendary scene in the 1935 Broadway spectacular *Billy Rose's Jumbo*, in which the great comedian was caught trying to sneak a real live elephant off stage.

"What are you doing with that elephant?" a policeman demanded.

"Elephant?" Durante replied. "What elephant?" ♦

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The CBS Whitewash

The coverup continues

By Jonathan V. Last

Last September, CBS News president Andrew Heyward promised a full accounting within "weeks, not months" of his network's attempt to pass off as genuine four fraudulent memos about President Bush's long-ago service in the Texas Air National Guard. Last Monday—nearly four months later—CBS released its report.

Compiled by independent investigators Dick Thornburgh and Louis D. Boccardi, the 224-page document looked thorough enough, and its executive summary contained some bracing language. The *60 Minutes Wednesday* segment shown on September 8, 2004, suffered from "considerable and fundamental deficiencies." Its producers had "failed miserably" to authenticate the purported memos from Col. Jerry Killian that supposedly substantiated the old claim that George W. Bush had received favorable treatment in the TexANG in the 1970s. The network had been guilty of "myopic zeal" in rushing the story onto the air. The *Wall Street Journal* deemed the report "scathing," and the *New York Times* called it a "crushing blow" to CBS's credibility.

Only on closer examination do the report's core weaknesses become clear. For while it includes quite a lot of detail, its authors decline to draw conclusions on two essential factual matters: Were the documents CBS relied on copies of authentic 1972 memos? And was the reporting of them motivated by political bias? Without a final judgment on these counts, the report is useless—or worse.

Were the Killian memos forged? The Thornburgh-Boccardi panel makes a great show of its agnosticism on this question. Its members are certain of their uncertainty: "The Panel was not able to reach a definitive conclusion as to the authenticity of the Killian documents."

This was perhaps the most newsworthy statement in the CBS report. Most people considered it long since established that the documents were fakes. This had been settled by a large cohort of experts, a bevy of testimony from the blogosphere, and most definitively by Dr. Joseph Newcomer.

When the scandal broke last fall, Newcomer, one of the fathers of modern electronic typesetting, found himself intrigued. Not normally interested in politics, he was interested in typography and fonts, and he noticed problems with the CBS memos almost immediately. After investigating, he came to the unequivocal conclusion that the documents were "modern forgeries." What many on the Internet had suspected, Newcomer proved. On Friday, September 10, he sent his lengthy analysis to a number of local and national media outlets, including *Time* and *Newsweek*. No one bothered to call him back, so on September 11 he posted his work on a website. A few hours later, it was everywhere.

Newcomer's analysis and conclusions, soon joined by other experts, quickly came to be accepted as definitive. So why did the Thornburgh-Boccardi panel spurn Newcomer and the rest of the body of expert opinion? What caused them to reopen the possibility that the documents might be copies of authentic memos after all?

Appendix 4 of the CBS report details the panel's inquiry into the technical aspects of the memos. It relies heavily on the testimony of Peter Tytell, a forensic document examiner with impressive qualifications, including having once been called a "famous typewriter detective" by CBS's own Andy Rooney.

Like Newcomer, Tytell came to some quick conclusions. He told the panel that even while watching the September 10 *CBS Evening News* broadcast at home, he'd known "within 5 seconds" that something was wrong with the documents CBS was showcasing as newly discovered memos from 1972. In fact, on September 10—the same day Newcomer sent his essay to members of the media—Tytell had contacted CBS to explain "in detail why he believed the Killian documents were likely fakes."

Eventually, the panel hired Tytell to serve as its document expert. He examined the Xeroxes carefully and came to three conclusions: (1) Previously released Texas Air National Guard documents from the early 1970s had been created on an "Olympia manual typewriter." (2) The four disputed Killian memos "were not produced on an Olympia manual typewriter." And (3) "The Killian docu-

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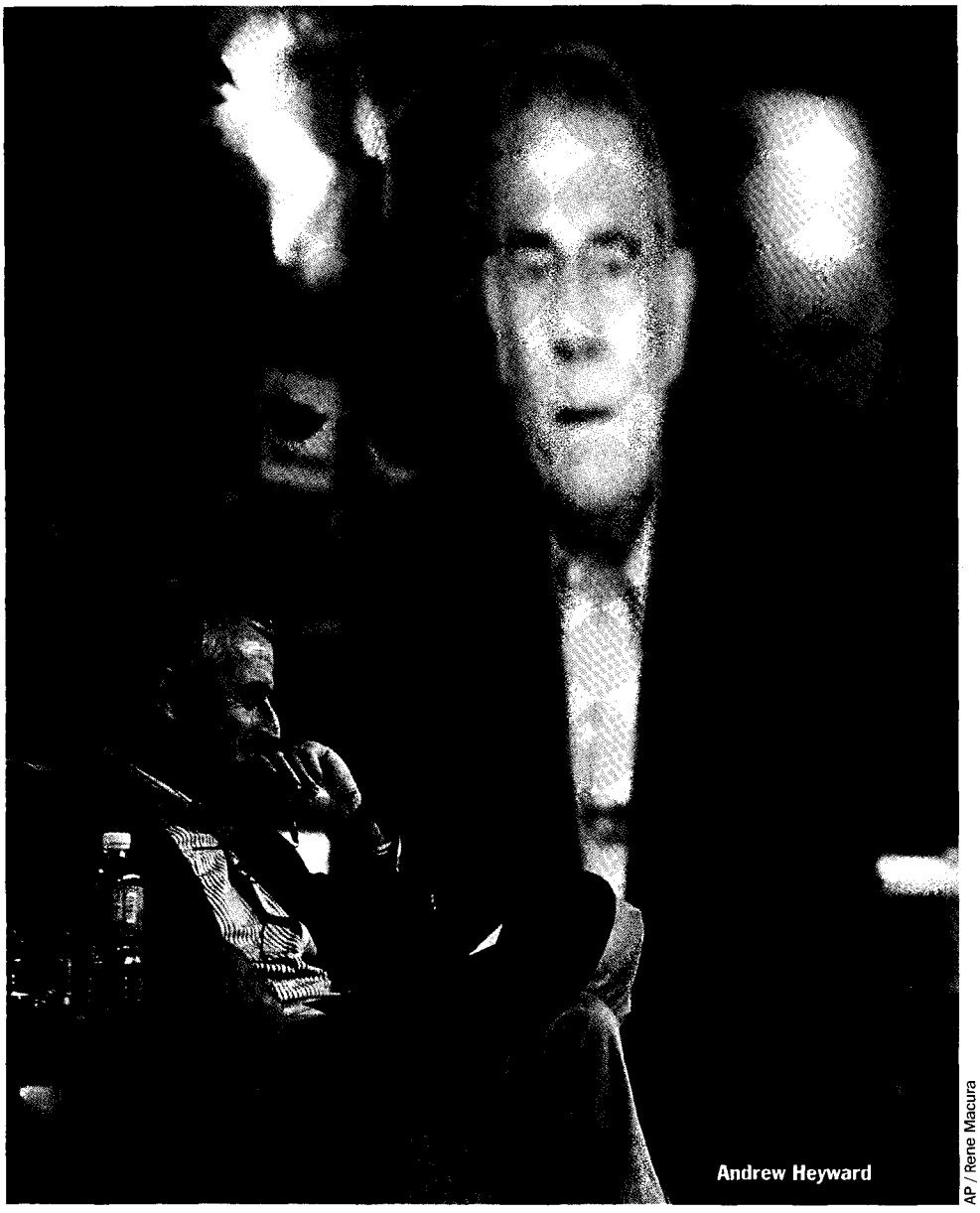
ments were produced on a computer in Times New Roman typestyle."

Why was Tytell so sure? The Killian memos had proportional spacing, a superscript "th", and a serif typestyle. Tytell consulted the *Haas Atlas*—the typesetter's bible—looking for a typewriter model that could have produced these features in 1972, and "did not find a single match with the Killian documents."

Still, it had been suggested that an IBM Selectric could have produced a match. Tytell was thorough on this point. First, he noted that during the early 1970s, "a typical TexANG office was unlikely to have had an IBM Selectric Composer" because "the machines were very expensive, difficult to use and designed primarily for the commercial production of books, newspapers and other printed material." Still, supposing Killian's unit had had one of these machines, what would it have taken to render it capable of creating the Killian memos? Tytell concluded that the TexANG office would have had to weld both a superscript "th" and a "#" key to its IBM Selectric, a process Tytell calls "highly inconvenient."



Andrew Heyward

AP / Rene Macura

And even allowing for these mounting improbabilities, the typestyle from such a modified Selectric Composer *still* would not have matched exactly the type in the Killian memos. The two typestyles are "very close," Tytell concluded, but there are "noticeable differences." Tytell told the panel that he did "not believe that any manual or electric typewriter of the early 1970s could have produced the typeface used in the Killian documents." As the panel sums up his findings,

> the documents appear to have been produced in Times New Roman typestyle. . . . Times New Roman was only available on typesetting and other non-tabletop machines until the desktop publishing revolution in the 1980s. Therefore [Tytell] concluded that Times New Roman could not have been available on a typewriter in the early 1970s and the Killian documents must have been produced on a computer.

Which brings us back to Joseph Newcomer. After all his careful study, Peter Tytell reached exactly the same conclusion as Newcomer. And, like Newcomer, Tytell offered a forthright judgment. The panel reports, "Tytell concluded that the Killian documents were generated on a computer."

So, again, how did Thornburgh and Boccardi manage to walk away from their own expert's unambiguous verdict? The answer is hidden in footnote 16 on page 7 of Appendix 4:

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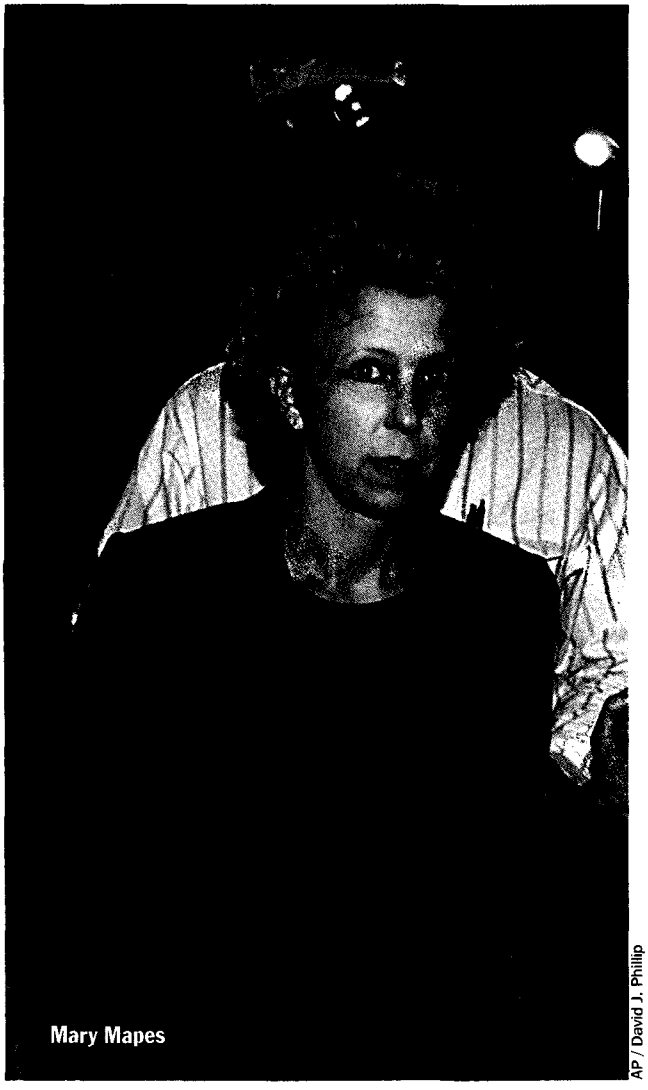

Mary Mapes

AP / David J. Phillip

Although his reasoning seems credible and persuasive, the Panel does not know for certain whether Tytell has accounted for all alternative typestyles that might have been available on typewriters during that era.

If they were concerned about gaps in Tytell's knowledge, did the panel consult other experts? No. Instead, Thornburgh and Boccardi solicited the opinion of this single expert; then, when he reached an unwanted conclusion, they turned their backs on it.

Was there a political agenda behind the segment? The CBS report addresses this question head-on, too, and again fails to reach a solid conclusion. In a six-page section entitled "Whether There Was a Political Agenda Driving the September 8 Segment," the report acknowledges that some sectors of the media imputed bias to CBS. To explore this charge, the panel simply asked two of the principals—correspondent Dan Rather and producer Mary Mapes—directly whether or not their motivation had been political: "Both strongly denied that they brought any political bias to the Segment."

It seems unlikely that either Rather or Mapes would perceive their own political bias—and even more unlikely that they would cop to it if they did. Yet Thornburgh and Boccardi accept their denials and pronounce, "The Panel will not level allegations for which it cannot offer adequate proof." Which is curious, since the panel then proceeds to pile up a high mound of proof that at least some CBS journalists were indeed motivated by political bias.

To wit: The report tells us that Mapes and Rather had pursued the story for five years; that they relied on a number of anti-Bush sources; that they tried to use a "gratuitous" and "inflammatory" interview with one Colonel David Hackworth; and that Mapes attempted to put Bill Burkett, the source of the Killian Xeroxes, into contact with the Kerry campaign.

Thornburgh and Boccardi reject the length of time spent on the story as "persuasive evidence of a political agenda." Moreover, they do "not believe that evidence exists to demonstrate" that the political leanings of the anti-Bush sources influenced the story. And they "cannot conclude that this proposed use of Colonel Hackworth was part of any political agenda."

But there is more. The report tells us that back in 1999, early in their pursuit of the story, Mapes sent an internal email to CBS senior and executive producers including Rather, in which she opined—with no evidence—that "in his military career, Bush was truly born on third base." During the summer of 2004, "Mapes and her team were not focused on any particular event or topic . . . but instead . . . were trying to identify a viable story line regarding the President's military service."

It was at this point that Mapes linked up with a Texas journalist named Michael Smith. Smith had been dangling in front of her the prospect of anti-Bush evidence (a "tasty brisket," in his words), but wanted to be hired on for the expedition. He was, and became an associate producer for *60 Minutes Wednesday*. Smith led Mapes to Paul Lukasiak and Linda Starr, Texas activists who ran anti-Bush websites, who in turn sent her to the now infamous Bill Burkett. (This was not the first time CBS had crossed Burkett's path. For an earlier story on Bush and the national guard on the *CBS Evening News* in February 2004, John Roberts had interviewed Burkett and found him to be "unreliable.")

Burkett played hard to get, so Smith got creative. Why not offer Burkett an inducement? He wrote an email to Mary Mapes:

> Today I am going to send the following hypothetical scenario to a reliable, trustable editor friend of mine. . . . What if there was a person who might have some information that could possibly change the momentum of an election but we needed to get an ASAP book deal to help get us

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> the information? What kinds of turnaround payment schedules are possible, keeping in mind the book probably could not make it out until after the election. . . . What I am asking is in this best case hypothetical scenario, can we get a decent sized advance payment, and get it turned around quickly. Then they will respond with some possible scenarios of what they could do. When we get to Burkett's house I will have at least some scenarios to show Burkett about what could happen if he played ball with the documents. [Ellipses in the original.]

Mapes responded: "That looks good, hypothetically speaking of course."

This talk of securing an advance for a source and "changing the momentum" of the election is not normal journalistic practice. It is damning stuff. To counter it, Thornburgh and Boccardi offer only Mapes's and Rather's denials. Was it bias? "Absolutely, unequivocally untrue," thunders Rather. It was "proximity, not politics," demurs Mapes.

Thornburgh and Boccardi sum up: "The Panel cannot conclude that a political agenda at *60 Minutes Wednesday* drove either the timing of the airing of the Segment or its content."

The report is curious in its shifting standards of proof. While Thornburgh and Boccardi require metaphysical certainty in some areas, in others they eagerly jump to conclusions. Thus, despite all the complexities, the panel was able to find a single explanation for what went wrong at CBS. As Dick Thornburgh explained on the January 10 *NewsHour*, "If you're looking for a villain in this story, we have one. It's haste." How they were able to conclude that haste alone accounted for the deficiencies of the *60 Minutes Wednesday* segment is unclear. The report contains a dash of hearsay, but little factual evidence on this score.

It is also curious that while the panel could discover no political agenda at CBS, it readily found one elsewhere. Explaining how the authenticity of the documents first came to be questioned, Thornburgh and Boccardi—again without citing evidence—trace this to "some people on the Internet, at first primarily supporters of President Bush with their own conservative political agenda."

Still another curiosity is that the Thornburgh-Boccardi report makes little effort to reinvestigate the particulars of the segment in question. Where, for instance, did the documents come from? We are told that Bill Burkett, who gave them to Mapes, first claimed to have received them from someone in the TexANG, then later informed CBS that a woman named Lucy Ramirez had arranged for the documents to be handed to him at a livestock show in Houston. We are also told that Burkett declined to cooperate with the panel. And that's that.

But what about Lucy Ramirez? Who is she? What was her role? Does she even exist? Here is the report's final mention of her: "[CBS News, after the story aired] sent personnel into the field to attempt to find Ramirez and thus possibly to confirm the new account. This effort proved unsuccessful." Exit Lucy Ramirez.

In some quarters, the report's findings have been welcomed. CBS News, for instance, is now using it as a talisman to ward off charges of political bias. Taking note of Thornburgh and Boccardi's omnibus exoneration ("The Panel does not find a basis to accuse those who investigated, produced, vetted or aired the Segment of having a political bias"), Les Moonves, the head of CBS, said he was "gratified that the Panel, after extensive analysis and consideration, has found that, while CBS News made numerous errors of judgment and execution in this story, these mistakes were not motivated by any political agenda."

Dan Rather and Mary Mapes have found comfort in the report as well. For his part, Rather has said that he takes it "seriously" and will "keep its lessons well in mind." Maybe. Testifying before Thornburgh and Boccardi, "Rather informed the Panel that he still believes the content of the documents is true because 'the facts are right on the money,' and that no one had provided persuasive evidence that the documents were not authentic." Rather is sticking to his guns, in other words, and Thornburgh and Boccardi have now given him cover he previously lacked.

And then there is Mapes, the lone figure to be formally fired. (Rather is stepping down as anchor, but will remain a correspondent for *60 Minutes Wednesday*; three other CBS employees were asked to submit their resignations.) The former star producer accuses CBS of "scapegoating" her, and says that her dismissal is the result of "corporate and political considerations."

Like Rather, Mapes finds vindication in the panel's refusal to judge the memos forgeries. "It is noteworthy the panel did not conclude that these documents are false," she says in her defense. "Indeed, in the end, all that the panel did conclude was that there were many red flags that counseled against going to air quickly," she says, noting that her superiors, not she, determined when the story would air. "I am heartened," she says, "to see that the panel found no political bias on my part, as indeed I have none."

Mapes is supported in each of these particulars by the panel's report. With Thornburgh and Boccardi on her side, perhaps she's right—that her firing is unjust and she's been made a scapegoat.

The only other possible conclusion is that CBS's promised full accounting is a whitewash. ♦

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Lev Nisnevitch

The Making of the President, 2004

Did George Bush win or John Kerry lose? By MATTHEW CONTINETTI

In the summer of 2003, Teresa Heinz Kerry was perturbed. Her husband, John Kerry, once the frontrunner for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination, was slipping in the polls, steadily losing ground to former Vermont governor Howard Dean. Heinz Kerry intended to fight back—and she knew exactly how to do it. So she telephoned her husband's campaign manager and told him: "I want you to issue a challenge for me to debate Howard Dean."

As campaign anecdotes go, this one is a treasure. Yet it wasn't told until after Election Day, in the November 15, 2004, issue of *Newsweek*. And even then, it was only one story among hundreds in a 45,000-word article reported by seven different people and written by Evan Thomas—which has now been supplemented and published in book form as *Election 2004: How Bush Won and What You Can Expect in the Future*.

The result is quite a piece of reportage. There are gossipy set-pieces (James Carville broke down in tears during a September meeting with top Kerry brass), there are tidbits of insider information (Laura Bush's Secret Service codename was "Tempo"), and there are quirky character notes (Joe Trippi, Howard Dean's campaign manager, once fell asleep standing up and "hit the floor with such force that he cracked a rib"). But the book is also a little bewildering. It contains so much detail, so many factoids, that a reader's first reaction must be: *How on earth did they get this stuff?*

Election 2004
How Bush Won and What You Can Expect in the Future
by Evan Thomas
and the Staff of *Newsweek*
Public Affairs, 209 pp., $14

Here's how. For over a year a team of *Newsweek* reporters had exclusive access to the presidential campaigns' upper echelons. They attended meetings, listened in on strategy sessions, befriended flacks and operatives, transcribed conversations—all on the condition that nothing they learned would be published until after November 2. This approach isn't new, of course. *Newsweek* has been making the same deals, assigning (in some cases) the same reporters, and writing the same long, long postelection stories every four years since 1984.

Twenty years is a long time, however, and a lot changed in those years. Cable news cycles began to spin faster and faster. Newspaper budgets shrank. Bloggers emerged to feed on headlines with a voracity that would raise eyebrows in a school of piranha. The market for long-form political journalism

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Associated Press / Jeff Chiu

died off, and so did most of its practitioners. By now, it seems as though *Newsweek* is the only publication left with the organization, the resources, the clout, and the contacts to undertake big-picture projects such as *Election 2004*.

And that project is . . . well, *what*, exactly? After all, the campaign had only just ended when the report appeared. To paraphrase John Kerry, memories of it are still seared—seared—in voters' minds. It is not quite time for a refresher course. But, still, one has the feeling that Thomas wanted to do something more than write a sketchy narrative containing some pithy anecdotes.

Indeed, Thomas says the report was intended as "the first draft of history," and as such it is largely successful. Thomas and his reporting team, through sheer accumulation of detail, present clear portraits of the two candidates and their organizations, with scene after scene, conversation after conversation. And all that reporting ends up explaining why Bush won and Kerry lost—for *Election 2004*'s portrait of John Kerry is not a flattering one.

Take for instance that moment on February 4, 2004, when Kerry was on his way to have his picture taken for *Time* magazine. He had won a series of primaries the day before, which established him as the Democratic frontrunner. So *Time* wanted some photographs, one of which would end up on the magazine's cover. On the van ride over, Kerry asked his valet, Marvin Nicholson, for the senatorial hairbrush. Nicholson, like the senator, is an outdoorsman. Not long ago, he had met Kerry in a surf shop in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was employed at the time. Soon after that, Nicholson became the senator's assistant.

But he had forgotten Kerry's hairbrush.

"Sir, I don't have it," Nicholson told Kerry, according to *Election 2004*.

"Marvin, f—!" Kerry replied.

When Kerry's press secretary, David Wade, suggested the senator borrow his hairbrush, Kerry snapped, "I'm not using Wade's brush." Then he turned back on his assistant. "Marvin, f—," he repeated, "it's my *Time* photo shoot."

The story opens a perfect little window into John Kerry's character, the strange tics and tremors underneath his public persona. And there are dozens of other such stories as well. In August 2004 Kerry summoned his aides for a meeting. His second (and final) campaign manager, Mary Beth Cahill, was there. So were senior advisers Bob Shrum and Tad Devine. According to *Election 2004*, Devine urged Kerry to break federal campaign spending caps. Devine's concern was that if Kerry did not do so, his campaign, like Al Gore's, would not have the resources to be competitive against Bush. "We were there with Al Gore in 2000 when he had to make the awful choice between Ohio and Florida," said Devine. "We'd hate to see you have to make that decision this time, Senator."

The assembled crowd sat in silence, waiting for the candidate's reply:

> Kerry seemed impatient, distracted, even a little irritated. "Is José here?" he asked. "Where's José?"
>
> Everyone looked around, bewildered. Who was José?
>
> "Teresa's nephew, José," said Kerry. "Somebody go find José." The nephew, José Ferreira, was a Harvard MBA whom Kerry relied upon for advice on strategy and communications. He was duly summoned, introduced by Kerry as a "math whiz" and told to make the argument he had made to Kerry and Teresa one night.
>
> A lengthy and inscrutable discussion of mathematical probabilities ensued. Campaign staffers looked around uneasily, but not one was willing to challenge Teresa's favorite nephew, a household fixture sometimes known as "the fourth son."

Such moments irked Kerry's senior aides, one assumes. But a lot else irked them, too. Jim Jordan, who was fired in November 2003 and replaced by Cahill, told *Newsweek* that Kerry was "hand-wringing and dithering."

One "top aide" told the reporters behind *Election 2004* that Kerry would "whine constantly." Then the aide mimicked Kerry: "'I'm not getting enough exercise, I'm overscheduled, I didn't get the speech on time'"—"On and on," the aide continued, "ad nauseam."

Often Kerry was in a state of disbelief. In April, he muttered to aides: "I can't believe I'm losing to this idiot." Later, faced with criticism over his "I actually voted for the $87 billion [for reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq] before I voted against it" remark, Kerry said: "I can't believe I'm getting killed over a stupid thing I said, and this guy has totally screwed up the war—and he's not paying a price for it." And later still, on the day of the final debate, Kerry saw a newspaper headline which read: "TIME TO BREAK THE TIE." "I don't understand this," Kerry said to no one in particular. "I've

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beaten the guy twice now—and somehow it's a tie. Why is this a must-win for me? When is it going to be a must-win for him?"

This idiot, he, the guy, him: Apparently Kerry never referred to President Bush by name. This might seem a small point, but the pronouns are in fact evidence of great condescension, which, in turn, point to even greater insecurity. It is no trifle that Kerry's constant companion on the road was his cell phone. Aides told the *Newsweek* reporters that Kerry was always calling acquaintances and asking for advice and criticism. It didn't matter whether it was from his brother or Richard Holbrooke or Bob Shrum or his nephew José; the candidate needed to hear what he was doing wrong, what he was missing. When John Sasso, who helped run Michael Dukakis's 1988 presidential bid, came on board the Kerry campaign late in the game, his first decision was to get rid of Kerry's cell phone. Which he did. Until Kerry took it back.

In retrospect, it is surprising that Kerry did as well as he did. He won 48 percent of the popular vote to the president's 51 percent. He was only a little over 100,000 votes short of a victory in Ohio and thus in the Electoral College. And yet it is hard to understand how such numbers were put up by a candidate who, in Reno, Nevada, just days before the election,

> launched into a long and rambling speech, one of his most soporific in weeks. A simple line in his prepared text on the need to fix Social Security became a five minute explanation of how the system got broken. He gave the same prolix treatment to health care, with a strange overreaching assertion that the Bush health-care plan was "killing millions of Americans." A 25-minute speech went on for close to an hour.

Or a candidate who, according to Thomas, told an audience in Spring Green, Wisconsin, that "he knew how hard it was to find the right financial options because he had two children and three stepchildren." (Whereupon the crowd, knowing that Kerry is married to a billionaire, "audibly laughed at him.")

The portrait of President Bush in *Election 2004* could not be more different. The book doesn't have a lot about Bush, for one thing. Which is understandable: Bush is the president. He has better things to do than let a reporter from *Newsweek* follow his every move. The sections on the Bush campaign focus more heavily on the president's top political advisers. Still, the contrast between Bush and Kerry is clear—if only because Kerry emerges as a complex and flawed individual, while Bush is presented in purely superficial terms, as a pained and, at times, peevish war leader.

You probably already knew that. You probably knew the president "needed a break," or that he "saw himself as a war president in a war without end," or that he showed "his true feelings about Kerry" during the first presidential debate, when "his whole body and manner cried out that he was a president with a war to fight who didn't want to be bothered trading verbal jabs with the kind of supercilious know-it-all he had loathed since Yale days."

So, too, you've probably already read about how, after the election, stung by press criticism, the president chased down a reporter to show him a letter from a . . . oh, wait. That wasn't Bush. It was Kerry, on November 11, nine days after he lost his chance to become the president of the United States. This is how Thomas tells the story:

> As the reporter left and walked down the street away from the [senator's Beacon Hill town] house, Kerry called out to him by name. He came down the sidewalk holding a letter that had just been left on his doorstep. It was written in the hand of a schoolgirl and read, in part, "John Kerry, you're the greatest!" Kerry looked directly into the reporter's eye, as if he were searching for something. "The pundits have never liked me," he said. "I don't know why. Is it the way I look? The way I sound?"

If John Kerry reads Evan Thomas's account of the 2004 election, the answer might suggest itself. ♦

Brian Snyder / Reuters / Landov

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The Side Story

William Trevor and the compulsion to tell other people's tales for them. BY HUGH ORMSBY-LENNON

Many readers believe William Trevor deserves the Nobel Prize for literature. But the Irish story-writer is not a smiling public man like Seamus Heaney, who seems as comfortable penning literary essays or lecturing at Harvard as he is writing poems. Trevor's public statements are few and far between. Indeed, even when he does allow an interview, he is usually nothing more than genial and reticent.

A Bit on the Side
Stories
by William Trevor
Viking, 244 pp., $24.95

But there's a reason for this. In his fiction, Trevor has a compulsion to "tell other people's stories for them" rather than to deliver his own judgments, whether literary or political. The short stories in his latest collection, *A Bit on the Side*, render action primarily through the memories and imaginations of his characters as they make sense of their lives by refashioning their own narratives. "Stories about stories" carries a threat of the formulaic, but Trevor offers a profound insight into the stories with which we craft our own lives, both for ourselves and for others. Now in his seventies, Trevor still has a mind teeming with new characters whose narratives he teases out in an understated yet beautifully crafted prose.

So, in his title story, "A Bit on the Side," Trevor glimpses "in the plate-glass of a department-store window" the "stylishness" of an adulterous relationship. Readers never discover the names of the lovers because the author represents them with the pronominal "he" and "she," which makes them simultaneously anonymous and intimate. Trevor explores the feelings of the lovers, but we also remain conscious that we are—like the waitress, cabdriver, music students, beggar, and art museum guides who are given bit parts—on the outside looking in.

The slight plot concerns the woman's sensing a change in the man's attitude. Trevor is on record explaining that he likes to rewrite his stories in different ways, and in "A Bit on the Side" he revisits adulterous territory he had mapped in stories from the 1970s, "Office Romances" and "Lovers of Their Time." This new pair of lovers starts out, as usual, with no more than another "office romance." But this pair has far finer feelings than the sundry adulterers in "Office Romances."

Amid the routines of the lovers' meetings—Trevor shows exquisitely how human circumstances are consecrated by habit—Trevor's adulterer finds that he catches contempt in the eyes of all who see him with his mistress. They see her as "his bit on the side." "I can't bear it that they think that," he says. To which she replies, "It doesn't matter what people think." So close is their relationship that no rancor intrudes into the disagreement. The woman reflects that the man feels "trapped by [her] divorce"—a cleverly devised asymmetry on Trevor's part. To the woman her lover's "family remained mysterious," the provider primarily of his limp sandwiches. The center of consciousness is mainly that of the woman, as she wrestles with the man's discomfort.

Into some of the stories Trevor introduces gothic elements. In "Sitting with the Dead," there's the just-widowed Protestant Irishwoman avoiding "the carnal remains [upstairs] of the man who was at last at peace," her surly and irreligious horse-breeder husband. Her unhappy memories of twenty-three years of difficult marriage crystallize during an unanticipated visit by two Catholic sisters from the Legion of Mary, who came to sit with the husband as he dies. In "On the Streets," there's the fifty-one-year-old cockney office-cleaner Cheryl—"shabby in a maroon coat that once she'd been delighted to own and now disliked"—bothered by an ex-husband, a petty criminal who claims to have murdered a woman. The banality of the circumstances will make the reader anxious about what has actually transpired. In "Traditions" Trevor investigates an eerie mystery—seven tame jackdaws, kept by seven youths near their boarding school, have had their necks wrung—and he shows how one youth and a middle-aged maid (whom he believes responsible for the killing) envision, independently, the sexual relationship they seem destined to have.

In "Big Bucks," John Michael leaves his girlfriend Fina behind in a fishing village on the west coast of Ireland when he travels to America as an illegal immigrant in order to make his fortune so he can come back and marry her. "Big Bucks" doesn't work out as one expects, but it is psychologically unerring.

In "An Evening Out," Trevor follows an unsuitable couple through a blind date arranged by the "Bryanston Square Introduction Bureau." Nothing much happens; yet the conclusion is quietly startling. In "Graillis's Legacy" and "Rose Wept" there is an assortment of lovers, musing from unusual perspectives upon extramarital liaisons. In the first story, Graillis's wife and the other woman are both dead, and Graillis, a small-town Irish librarian, reflects upon a platonic affair during which books were discussed. In "Rose Wept," Trevor examines acts of adultery by the wife of a private tutor from the perspective of his last pupil, the eighteen-year-

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old Rose who, at the end of the story, "wept for all her young life before her, and other glimpses and other betrayals."

Trevor has an uncanny gift for working his own mind into female psychology and the stories that he fashions from that gift are well-represented in *A Bit on the Side*. Trevor has explained that "when people ask me why I have written so much about women, it is out of curiosity about women, because I am not a woman." Trevor struck one interviewer "as eavesdropping on the conversation of a couple at a corner table behind us" in a small hotel. Indeed, he says his

> work can begin in all kinds of different ways. . . . You listen to two people, say in a café in Italy, and they walk away and you invent what happens next. These two innocent people are being used but they don't know and anyway it doesn't matter.

For a collection aimed at wide sales in America, Trevor's title is particularly wry. "A bit on the side"—an old-fashioned, usually jocular, English phrase for an adulterous affair—has little currency on this side of the Atlantic. The monosyllabic idiom—unfamiliar to most Americans—has almost become more intriguing as a riddle than for its extracurricular meaning. By choosing it as a title, Trevor surely pays droll tribute to his own undimmed creativity and for the results delivered upon what must seem, increasingly, borrowed time. Trevor's own marriage of fifty years has, by every account, been remarkably happy, and he received an honorary knighthood in 2002 for his services to literature. Another collection of stories about the vicissitudes of ordinary people's lives must indeed seem like "a bit on the side."

Six of the twelve stories in *A Bit on the Side* are about Ireland, where Trevor has roved increasingly in his fiction. Trevor may have received a British knighthood, but he still identifies himself as an Irishman. Remarkable changes in contemporary Ireland—its sexual revolution, its Celtic tiger economy, its discomfort with immigration, the travails of its Catholic Church, and so on—might now seem to have robbed Trevor of a familiar territory in which he had previously found what he needed in order to explore human experiences of entrapment. But his rural or small-town settings—rendered with a fine documentary accuracy—have always only provided a cue for exploring human emotions that can be understood on both sides of the Irish Channel and on both sides of the Atlantic.

William Trevor

Viking

In "Justina's Priest," Father Clohessy claims that in Ireland "now there was money where there'd been poverty, ambition where there'd been humility." Nothing much happens in "Justina's Priest"—Trevor's stories can attain a high degree of plotlessness. Justina is a young learning-disabled woman who will not, it appears, visit Dublin to see her old schoolfriend Breda who may now, so one character thinks to himself, be working as a prostitute. Father Clohessy remembers how, in these changing times, Breda's T-shirt had not so long ago invited sexual congress (in describing the shirt, Trevor uses a four-letter word he has never used before). Such crudities in the town further dispirit a priest who "wondered if he had become prey to despair, the worst sin of all in the canon that was especially a priest's."

Just after remembering Breda's T-shirt, he realizes he is unable to apologize to his respectful parishioners for the church's sexual scandals: "He could not blame them if in his sermons he didn't know what to say to them any more." It is the sweet-tempered Justina—who volunteers to polish the brass, mop the floors, and clean the candle-holders—who might just save Father Clohessy.

Not able to see Justina well through the screen of the confessional, Father Clohessy imagines her face as she is absolved of her sins at the end of the story: "Then happiness would break in that face that saw God in his own." The story has begun with Justina Casey—"sinless as ever"—at the end of an earlier confession, leaving the church. The symbolism of the story's conclusion which involves the priest imagining the lineaments of her face and faith (where they can barely be descried) is double-edged: On the one hand, faith is always a mystery that can be known only in the imagination; on the other hand, seemingly only the mentally challenged in Ireland have such faith anymore. Of such indeterminacy Trevor is a master.

"I'm always saying that my books are religious," Trevor has remarked, adding that "nobody ever believes me." We should start. For example, St. Justina saved Cyprian from despair. If Trevor does not invoke dogmatic theology as do James Joyce and Flannery O'Connor, his fiction is full of local epiphanies. Consider the conclusions to "The Dancing Master's Music" and to "Sacred Statues."

"The Dancing Master's Music" is the simplest, but most haunting, story in the collection. Because it begins with

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what appears to be a large, Edwardian-sort of cast in a Stately Home—the social comedy in the servants' hall is brilliantly observed—we are startled to find that it ends in the present. Fourteen-year-old Brigid Ranahan has just been taken on as a scullery maid, and for mysterious reasons the Anglo-Irish owner of the house decides that the visiting Italian dancing master will perform a piano concert for the staff in the drawing room.

It is Brigid's first time upstairs; she "had never seen a portrait before." Most of the staff are bored or restless, but Brigid is transported. The music stays with her always. The years pass, the house crumbles, and an unmarried Brigid attains the age of Old Mary, who had sat with her at the concert. In the last, intricate sentence of the story Brigid realizes that the music "would be there when she was gone, the marvel in her life a ghost for the place."

In "Sacred Statues," a poor young man with a gift for sculpting wrestles with a stalled career in the Irish countryside. Unable to cope with the responsibilities of his family, he takes a job as a road worker. The center of consciousness in the story is, however, that of his fertile wife, who strives to ensure that her husband will create in wood just as she does in flesh.

At the end of the story, she scrutinizes in his workshop the "undisguised tranquillity" of the saints he has carved: "Touched by it, lost in its peace, she sensed their resignation too. The world, not she, had failed." A religious epiphany? Trevor is often charged with pessimism, but here the dreams of a character are left undiminished by the world's intractability.

"My fiction," Trevor diffidently explains, "may, now and again, illuminate aspects of the human condition, but I do not consciously set out to do so: I am a storyteller." Still, in *A Bit on the Side* Trevor again illuminates the mysteries of the human condition. Mystery works at several levels. The author casts himself as no more than a messenger-boy. He himself enjoys reading thrillers and mysteries, customarily citing them rather than any single author as his major influence. His own short stories are mysteries insofar as we must, gradually and gently, unpick the secrets of a life or of a relationship. Set in the present but evoking a complex past that needs disentangling, the stories show the vagaries of chance and the mysteries of "love."

The formula of having characters spin their own yarns always threatens to fall over into the formulaic. That it so rarely does bears witness to the author's skill. Trevor has been telling these stories for nearly half a century. That his essential formula hasn't changed alerts us to the gift of a writer who is the best short-story writer at work in the world today. ♦

Ford Beats Reagan!

How conservatism won in 1980 by losing in 1976.

BY ROBERT D. NOVAK

Late on the evening of August 19, 1976, at the Kemper Arena in Kansas City, prospects looked bleak for the Republican party and even bleaker for the conservative movement. Gerald R. Ford had just barely survived a fierce challenge for the party's presidential nomination by Ronald Reagan. The Republican establishment at every level was furious, contending that Reagan's challenge had made it much less likely that President Ford could be elected. Not even Reagan's champions imagined that his failed campaign would be the salvation of the party and of the nation.

Reagan's Revolution
The Untold Story of the Campaign That Started It All
by Craig Shirley
Nelson Current, 417 pp., $25.99

In *Reagan's Revolution*, the first book-length account of the only campaign Reagan ever lost, Republican activist Craig Shirley describes the state of the GOP at the moment of Ford's nomination in the opening paragraph of his first chapter: "By the late summer of 1974, the Republican party was in its death throes. Bereft, bedraggled, unloved, and unwanted, it stood for nothing and antagonized everyone. If the GOP had been a stray cat, it would have been hauled away to the animal shelter and immediately euthanized."

That graphic description is no exaggeration. As Shirley relates it, a sixty-five-year-old former governor of California who had spent most of his life as a B-movie actor nearly ousted an incumbent president. If Reagan had not challenged the president and had not come so close to succeeding, the subsequent history of the United States and of the world would have been quite different.

The Republican party indeed seemed to be dying after the 1974 election, in the wake of Richard Nixon's disgrace and resignation. The Democratic margin in Congress was staggering, 147 seats in the House of Representatives and 22 in the Senate. Only 13 governors were Republicans. As gloomy party members assembled in Kansas City, polls showed Ford trailing Democratic nominee Jimmy Carter by more than 30 percentage points.

Reagan's challenge was greeted by the party leadership as a stab in the back of a gravely ill person. That last night of the 1976 convention at Kemper Arena was not a happy occasion. Reagan had to be coaxed by Ford from his skybox to stand next to Ford on the podium after the president delivered

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his acceptance speech. Reagan said he did it because he didn't want to disappoint the cheering delegates. His impromptu remarks, eliciting a greater response than Ford's did, did not mention the president by name and praised only the conservative platform forced by the Reagan rebels on the party leadership. He had no plans to campaign for Ford, and it would be weeks before he did.

Considering the nation's veneration of Reagan at the time of his death, it is difficult to imagine the low assessment of him that prevailed in elite opinion thirty years ago. The *New York Times*'s James Reston, the model for journalists across the country, wrote that Reagan's challenge was "patently ridiculous," an "amusing but frivolous fantasy," and an event that "makes no sense." When Theodore Roosevelt launched the last previous intraparty challenge against a Republican president by opposing William Howard Taft in 1912, he'd been the most popular living American. Ronald Reagan was hardly known outside California in 1976.

The failure of the Ford presidency was the reason Reagan became the first challenger since Roosevelt to threaten seriously the renomination of an incumbent Republican. His pardon of Richard Nixon is usually cited as the reason for Ford's unpopularity, but it went much deeper. He seemed to have no public purpose, and his presidency revealed no philosophy. A Republican president whose hero was Harry Truman has perception problems from the beginning. A career politician from Grand Rapids, Michigan, he appeared to share Henry Kissinger's belief that the declining West could not successfully compete with the Soviet bloc and an accommodation had to be found.

Reagan's grassroots popularity grew as the public perceived he would take a harder position against the Kremlin than the Republican president who declined to see Russian dissenter Alexander Solzhenitsyn because it might offend Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and undermine détente. But Reagan's clever and manipulative campaign manager John Sears pulled him away from such divisive issues in the interest of seeing him nominated by a united party. In the meantime, the Ford campaign pounded mercilessly against Reagan as unfit for the presidency. Ford disdained Reagan, and his attitude was spread throughout the president's campaign. The contempt for Reagan was palpable.

Stu Spencer, the feisty Los Angeles political consultant, was at Reagan's side in his first run for governor in 1966 and again when he was elected president in 1980. But in 1976, Spencer was directing the assault against Reagan and asserting he was not fit to be president.

Bettmann / CORBIS

Ronald Reagan campaigning in Illinois in 1976.

The Sears approach very nearly resulted in the early suffocation of Reagan's candidacy, when Ford won the first five primaries against Reagan. It was certainly no centrist but the right-wing senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina and his campaign manager, Tom Ellis, who circumvented Sears and on their own waged an active campaign in their state. Had it not been for this North Carolina upset, Reagan would have dropped out of the 1976 race and never been seen in 1980. It was that close.

Even so, nobody thought of 1976 as preparation for 1980. "Virtually everybody who left Kansas City," Shirley writes, "was convinced that Reagan's political future was over—his senior aides, maybe he himself, and certainly the political elites and the national media." Even Reagan was not aware that American politics in 1976 was in the midst of a realignment that Republicans had been too obtuse to understand, much less to exploit.

Journalists, scholars, and practical politicians all missed the migration of voters who would come to be called "Reagan Democrats" into the Republican party. By any standard, Ford's administration had been a failure. The United States was losing the Cold War, and the economy continued to be sluggish. The consensus in the political community was that a right-wing assault had turned what was difficult into something dreadful. Nobody could perceive that the Republican party was about to undergo a profound transformation.

The closest I came at the time to appreciating what really was going on was when, after Reagan's upset win in North Carolina, I traveled to Texas to report on that state's first Republican presidential primary and attended a Reagan rally in Fort Worth. In eighteen years of covering national politics at that point, I never had seen a Republican audience quite like this one. Shirley has quoted me as writing that the crowd of over three thousand people "lacked the sleek, chic look of Texas Republicans and seemed much more like a typical Wallace rally—women in housedresses, sports-shirted

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Reagan and Ford pose for a "peace photograph" after Ford captured the 1976 nomination.

men, lots of small American flags."

I then suggested that the "collapse of [George] Wallace's candidacy is sending right-wing populist Democrats" to vote for Reagan. The phenomenon was widely referred to in political circles as the Wallace "jailbreak." But that implies a temporary quality to the crossover, born of Wallace's failure. In fact, when Reagan won all one hundred delegates in the primary, it manifested the birth of a new kind of Republican in Texas. Within a generation, the party would dominate the state's politics. It was a harbinger for the South and the nation.

The only statewide elected Texas Republican official in 1976, Senator John Tower, was Ford's national-convention floor manager. He supported Ford along with nearly everybody in the party establishment nationwide. Among orthodox Republicans, there was emotional conviction that the Reagan campaign was a disreputable distraction that could only worsen the party's grim outlook.

The subplot to the rebellion of conservatives was the struggle between Sears, leading Reagan's campaign team, and the conservative activists headed by Helms and Ellis. Incredibly, Sears was trying in those days to nominate a Ronald Reagan stripped of all ideology, in order to unite, he supposed, the Republican party for the general election and to attract non-conservative voters.

Sears gave away his concept of Reagan in an interview with Shirley for the book. Describing his impression of Reagan after their first meeting, Sears called him "a great piece of horseflesh" that could be "properly trained, properly working." Helms and Ellis, in contrast, saw him as an ideologue who would combat the left. Nobody at that juncture perceived in him the potential for a great leader.

Helms was appalled when Sears talked Reagan into selecting as his running mate Senator Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania, who voted the straight labor line and was weak on national security (and was not, as Shirley says, "fairly conservative"). Depressing Reaganite spirits, this daring step did not pry away the forty to sixty delegates from Ford that Sears predicted.

Sears's real choice for vice president, however, is revealed by Shirley for the first time. Sears told the author he wanted Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, who had been purged by Ford from the 1976 ticket to appease conservatives. Sears is quoted as saying Helms and his friends "would have come off the ceiling in a day or two" but that he did not go through with it because he thought Rockefeller would be talked out of it after first accepting. Sears could not have appreciated how much Rockefeller's big-government Republicanism offended the party faithful.

Shirley, well known in the political community as a campaign consultant and public relations practitioner, is not a professional writer but has produced a very readable first book. It is nicely paced, meticulously researched, and packed with anecdotes. He uses both primary and secondary sources, plus interviews with surviving participants to produce an account of events that occurred when he was a junior in college. He is the dispassionate narrator, avoiding use of the first person and seldom presenting his own views.

A writer recording recent history has the problem of what to do about participants' remembering events of thirty years ago in a way that always puts them in the best light. John Sears and Dick Cheney, who was President Ford's chief of staff, were interviewed by Shirley and get generally sympathetic treatment. Shirley did not interview Clarke Reed, the Mississippi Republican leader, or Robert Hartmann, Ford's longtime adviser, and they come off very badly.

Shirley does not try to answer the questions that have been pondered in Republican circles for the past three decades. Could Reagan have defeated Carter had he been nominated? If he had, could a Reagan presidency have succeeded if he were elected before his views on taxes were fully developed? Was it the best of all possible worlds for Reagan to lose the 1976 nomination but to be ready to run in 1980?

Nobody knows. Reagan was indeed more fully prepared for the presidency in 1980 than he was in 1976. But if he somehow could have won that election, he would have saved the country the four years of the Carter presidency—providing a service to all Americans. Shirley's task is not to speculate on what might have been. He tells the story of a losing campaign that may have saved the country, and he does it well. ♦

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The Standard Reader

Books in Brief

***Blog: Understanding the Information Reformation That's Changing Your World: Why You Must Know How the Blogosphere Is Smashing the Old Media Monopoly and Giving Individuals Power in the Marketplace of Ideas* by Hugh Hewitt (Nelson, 225 pp., $19.99).** Maybe someone will go after me on grounds of conflict of interest for writing about this little volume. So I'll confess to having been a friend of Hugh Hewitt's for more than twenty years, since he clerked on the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C.

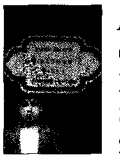
Since I knew Hugh years before he became *hughhewitt.com*, I can testify that back in the old days Hugh read big books, and naps were not unusual. He had a toe or two in the media, but his big media gig was in the slow lane of a public television show in Los Angeles.

Now I can't think of Hugh without thinking of speed, for speed it is—speed at the keyboard—that you need to make an impact as a blogger, which Hugh became three years ago. Hugh still has much else to do: He's got a radio talk show, still practices law, teaches in law school, and writes weekly columns (including for us, at *weeklystandard.com*). But it's in the blogosphere (explained in *Blog*) that Hugh has hit his most rapid stride, for there he posts as fast as news breaks.

Blog has the longest subtitle I've seen in a while, at least for a book published in a recent century, but it's all true to the book. For *Blog* is about the impact of the blogosphere upon the old news media. More broadly, it is about how "every single information hierarchy is under siege." It becomes a book for business executives, pastors—just about everyone, since all of us require information of one kind or another. Not surprisingly, one way to help yourself in this new era, Hugh says, is to become a blogger, like him.

Hugh Hewitt may be what the *Wall Street Journal* has called him—"the unofficial historian of the blogging movement." But for sure he's its lead evangelist. "You have to read this book very quickly," he writes. Quickly, so you can go online.

—Terry Eastland



***My Father's Rifle: A Childhood in Kurdistan* by Hiner Saleem (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 99 pp., $17).** Since the Iraq war, the history of Iraqi Kurds under Saddam Hussein and their movement for independence has taken on particular relevance. Though that makes Hiner Saleem's memoir of his childhood in 1970s Iraq timely, it would be a shame if this charming little book garnered attention only on that account. Saleem is an accomplished filmmaker (his film *Vodka Lemon* was a critical success), and *My Father's Rifle*, his first book, is as gently compelling as his films. He writes crisply, with economy and restraint, which allows him to treat several themes in his childhood completely and without sentimentality.

The son of an Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga fighter, Azad (as Saleem renames himself) describes a childhood dominated by the patriotic obligations of his family and his nation. As Cold War politics cynically force the Kurds under the power of the Baath party in Iraq, Azad's father futilely hopes for the best. Meanwhile, Azad struggles with his father's wishes as he nurtures artistic interests.

As a personal recollection, the book has more to do with how Saleem came of age in this tumultuous period than with the tumults themselves. And yet, he manages both to give a tender childhood portrait and to render the political circumstances behind that childhood. In the relation with his father, Saleem provides both the excitement and sadness of a child outgrowing his parent as well as a portrayal of the naive Kurds' captivity to Baath oppression. The charm of this wonderfully compact book lies in Saleem's ability to present the child's perspective while subtly conveying the wisdom of the man whom that child became. The result is a poignant memoir even more compelling than its background politics.

—Daniel Sullivan

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First Lady Laura Bush selects three Americans to design gowns

First Lady Laura Bush has selected three Republican men from Idaho, Wyoming, and Arkansas to create inaugural outfits. "I know people don't often think of Midwestern Republican fashion designers," says the First Lady, "yet they are every bit the equal of the world's..." (MORE)

◀ Pictured: Baby marmot fur coat and dress in magenta, with incredibly large gold buttons.

EVENTS SCHEDULE

PAYING TRIBUTE TO OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL:
Celebrating Service and Honoring Freedom, 6 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Honoring Celebration and Freeing Service, 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Celebrating Freedom and Servicing Honor, 8 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Getting Lit With Rummy, 9 p.m. – close

INAUGURATORY HISTORY: Interested in inaugurations past?

Inaugurations have never been inexpensive affairs, so some Americans become gift-givers. The 55th Inauguration will require quite a number of this sort of American. The tradition of inaugural pomp began with George Washington, who, we know from... (For more history, click *HERE*.)

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JANUARY 24, 2005

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America Needs Innovation in K–12 Education

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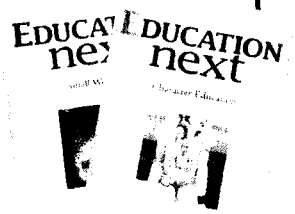

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The case for innovation is simple: less than half the schools in low-income areas of our big cities can meet the minimum state performance standards. Educators say, "We know how to make inner-city schools effective, but we can't do it until we get [fill in the blank: more money, more political will, a higher class of parents]." Don't let them kid you. **We really don't know how to educate millions of children whose preschool preparation and home supports are far different from the American middle-class norm.**

We need the kind of problem-solving effort that made it possible for America to go to the moon and find therapies for cancer and AIDS. We should encourage new initiatives and sift out the best for further development, until we have one or more options that can work.

Public education, however, fights this kind of problem solving. It is for innovation as long as school boards, district central offices, and teacher unions can do business as usual. Even charter schools, which could create diverse approaches to fuel innovation, are held down by the system. They get a lot less money than regular public schools and must pay for facilities that public schools get free. Many charter school leaders focus their creative energies on juggling bills and finding good teachers who will work for low pay.

Even when charter schools devise innovative ways of teaching, there is no mechanism for shifting money and students in their direction. State caps limit the number of charter schools that can exist, and local school boards fight charter schools that threaten to draw students away from district-run schools.

Real innovation is happening, but it is coming from higher education and private, often religious, schools. Middle College and Running Start programs are moving bored high school students onto college campuses, where they are too challenged and excited to drop out. Cristo Rey high schools remedy poor children's isolation from the mainstream economy by placing them into part-time office jobs, where they see how classroom lessons apply to the real world. Nativity middle schools, a precursor to the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP), provide a twelve-hour day complete with classes, sports, motivation, mentoring, and fun. These programs work—especially for the low-income city children who languish in conventional schools.

School districts resist such innovations. School board members say that KIPP demands too much of teachers and that Cristo Rey and Nativity are too tainted by religion. Here the institutional arrangements get in the way of progress. To be open to innovation, public education needs to let people with new ideas start schools, allow secular imitation of religious models, allow parents to move from less to more promising schools, and let money follow children wherever they go.

—Paul T. Hill

Paul T. Hill is a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution; a member of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education; and a research professor at the University of Washington's Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs.

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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